

2475/4084

MONASH UNIVERSITY

THESIS ACCEPTED IN SATISFACTION OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ON..... 1 December 2000.....

  
.....  
& Sec. Ph.D. and Scholarships Committee

Under the Copyright Act 1968, this thesis must be used only under the normal conditions of scholarly fair dealing for the purposes of research, criticism or review. In particular no results or conclusions should be extracted from it, nor should it be copied or closely paraphrased in whole or in part without the written consent of the author. Proper written acknowledgement should be made for any assistance obtained from this thesis.

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION  
OF A PSYCHOBIOLOGICAL METHOD  
OF BIRTH CONTROL**

Holly Cargill, B.A., Dip. Sc. Wk., M.A.P.S.

Faculty of Education

Monash University  
Clayton, Victoria 3168  
Australia

9/9/99

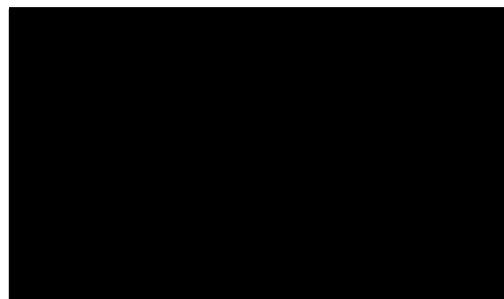
## CONTENTS

Statement of originality	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Abstract	vi
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Chapter 2. Contributions of psychological theory	16
- depth psychology	
- the archetype of the feminine	
- cultural conditions: creation vs procreation	
- the masculine principle	
- masculine and feminine creativity	
- phenomenological psychology	
- Abraham Maslow and self actualisation	
Chapter 3. Cycles of meaning: Mythology and anthropology	56
- mythology	
- the masculine principle	
- anthropology	
- anthropology and women	
- power and control: Male envy	
Chapter 4. Psychobiology	92
- the human reproductive cycle	
- pathways of mindbody communication	
Chapter 5. Part 1: Self-enquiry: Heuristics	105
Part 2: Self-enquiry: Hermeneutics	118

Chapter 6.	Methodological considerations	150
	- the phenomenological approach	
	- qualitative methodology	
	- quality control in qualitative research	
	- computing for qualitative data	
	- methodology: a journey towards understanding	
	- what am I measuring?	
	- the development of the methodology	
Chapter 7.	Gathering and sorting	175
	- stage one analysis	
	- stage two analysis	
	- stage three analysis	
Chapter 8.	Implications of findings	260
Bibliography		282
Appendices	A	307
	B	344
	C	356
	D	360
	E	374
	F	379
	G	388

Statement of Originality

This is to certify that this thesis is my own work, that it contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or equivalent institution, and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference is made in the thesis.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my supervisor, Phillip Greenway, for his faith in supporting this project even while letting me find my own way.

A special thanks to all those who offered support with the details of presentation, proof reading, and other helpful hints: Charni Cargill, Carol Jensen, Sandra and David Simmonds, and Philomena Tan. Grateful appreciation to Andrew for the nourishment and stimulation of all the intellectual, soul and body food, and to Aram, Saascha, Qi, and Jessi - for being there.

I am deeply appreciative of all the women who participated in the study, willingly telling their stories and engaging the process with enthusiasm. And to all the others who have expressed excitement about reading the finished work. I especially wish to acknowledge the inspiration of the men and women who have ventured into the realms of exploring the psyche where the rational is not the only language and much can be discovered by learning to attend to the inner world of experience at least as much as the outer world of information.

A deep and sincere honouring of Lilith, the first woman of myth, and guide to the mysteries.

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates a psychobiological method of birth control from a theoretical and phenomenological perspective. There are reports of women who regulate fertility through a conscious internal process without using drugs, devices or other established techniques. The theoretical basis for this study draws on psychology, mythology, anthropology, and psychobiology.

Psychoanalytic theories offer psychological insight into the historical perspective of female reproductive autonomy, as well as a description of intrapsychic dynamics relevant to fertility control practices; analytic theory describes the concept of the feminine principle as the archetypal construct underlying fertility and reproduction, and offers a model of developing consciousness which explains the conscious control of previously unconscious processes. Phenomenological psychology forms the basis for the methodological approach as well as offering further descriptions of intrapsychic processes relevant to the study of subjective experience. Mythology and anthropology provide accounts of related birth control practices, and locate the current research in an historical and cultural perspective. Psychobiological research can now explain the phenomenon of mind-body communication, and is reviewed in terms of internal regulation of fertility. The heuristic approach provides a theoretical basis for the analysis of

the author's personal material relevant to the thesis.

The methodological approach to investigating subjective experience is explored, culminating in three stages of data gathering and analysis. Stages 1 and 2 involve interviews with five women reporting a practice of conscious internal regulation of fertility and five women reporting experiences of conventional birth control. Language analysis of interview transcripts is based on theoretical and text derived categories. Stage 3 involves a Q-sort analysis of 30 women's responses to fifty statements representatively selected from the initial interviews, resulting in factors of choice vs no choice, empowerment vs powerlessness, control vs lack of control, taking active responsibility vs not assuming responsibility. While these elements are found to apply to women's experience of birth control more generally, the specific experience of internal regulation of fertility is best explained by theories of creativity which describe a capacity for disengagement from what conventionally exists combined with a deep engagement with developing a creative alternative. The permeability of conscious and unconscious processes is also found to be an important element in the experience of conscious internal regulation of fertility, and is considered in the light of current theoretical postulations of the emergence of a new consciousness.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

This thesis is a "story" about the human experience of the relationship between "mind" and "body". In the time and place of writing (Australia, 1990's), whatever people regard as "I" is usually considered something more of mind than of body. There is, however, another way of considering this. Analytical psychologist, C.G. Jung (CW, vol. 8), proposed that matter and psyche are not as different as they seem; they are two aspects of a single, interconnected reality, a continuum allowing for acausal connections which defy rational understanding. Consistent with this, current bio-medical research has revisioned the mind-body relationship as interconnecting systems operating with their own intelligences (Pert, 1997; Rossi, 1988). These ideas challenge consensus beliefs and attitudes which divide matter and psyche, body and mind. While there is now a general acceptance that the mind influences the body, and recognition of "psychosomatic" symptoms is commonplace, this still reflects a fundamental attitude of separation of mind and body. The language is just beginning, albeit clumsily, to include words that express something of the continuum along which this process occurs; mind-body systems, psycho-

neuro-immunological processes. There is a joining together of parts that have, in all probability, never been separate except in our understanding!

The specific mind-body process explored in this thesis is partly based on reports of women who have described regulating fertility through a psychobiological process (Jackson & Teague, 1978; Parvati, 1978; Rosenblum, 1976; Sjöo & Mor, 1987). These reports describe a method of controlling conception through a mind-body process of internal regulation, without resort to chemical agents, physical devices, or observable behavioural practices, and without altering sexual behaviour according to the fertility cycle as we know it. While there are occasional references to this practice in the literature, the original impetus for this study arose from my personal experience with this approach to birth control, from the actual experience of doing something which could not be easily explained by the available literature in psychology and biology. I could, in fact, find no direct reference to this particular sort of fertility practice in mainstream research.

There is, therefore, a personal story which must be told to make sense of what is being presented here. It has been suggested (Abram, 1996) that "the scientist does not randomly choose a specific discipline or speciality, but is drawn to a particular field by a complex of subjective experiences and encounters, many of which unfold far from the laboratory" (p. 33). My subjective experiences of reproductive autonomy form the ground from which this thesis has emerged. At the age of twenty-six, I had four children aged

between 6 months and 8 years, and was not sure how to effectively stop this abundant fertility. I also had a tertiary degree with studies in biology, so my uncertainty was not the result of ignorance about the reproductive cycle or available methods of birth control. It was the result of a considered rejection of chemical contraceptive methods and the successive failure of other conventional methods, culminating in a major medical emergency as the end result of using an IUD. Where all available contraceptive methods had failed or were unacceptable, what could be done to prevent pregnancy? It did, of course, occur to me that this had been the concern and domain of women for all of time. How had women resolved this before Western medical science offered the alternatives which I had recently rejected? Is it true that the contraceptive Pill was the first time women had reliable protection from the cycles of gestation and birth? Were there methods of birth control which allowed a woman to have true reproductive autonomy, deciding when, where, with whom, and how many children to produce for herself? The rhythm method claimed something like this, although most often it was wrapped in a Christian package fraught with morality and fear of the father God. It did occur to me at this stage of seeking alternatives that a father God was probably not the best reference point for female reproductive autonomy.

These questions directed me to an exploration of birth control practices throughout human history. It soon became obvious that this is an area which cannot be considered without reference to the social, political, cultural, philosophical, and religious influences which impact so profoundly on human

experience. The practice of a psycho-biological method of birth control deviates from current cultural consensus reality in a way that raises questions about belief, perception, and the premises of scientific understanding. These questions are addressed in the vast body of literature available about human processes. Some of this information comes in the form of what we know as facts, and some of it comes in the form of ideas. One of the most influential historians of science, Thomas Kuhn (1962), has reframed objective, impersonal scientific "facts" as belief systems or paradigms which, although true, are not an expression of absolute truth. From this perspective of science as mythology, the "facts" of our own time and place may, indeed, be similar to the "superstitions" of another time and place. The present thesis considers both "facts" and "superstitions" as they relate to the idea and experience of a psycho-biological process of birth control.

It has been strongly stated by many of those who write about the feminine journey of inner work that a relationship with the body is a vital ingredient in this work, that it must be embodied (Woodman, 1993). So too it was for me; the discovery of a birth control method which met my criteria arose from an embodied experience. What exactly happens when conception occurs? What needs to happen for it not to occur? These sorts of questions led me into a process of deep contemplation and meditation on the embodied experience of conception; exactly where does it happen?; what happens?; what would stop it happening? Through this process of sensing, questioning, and observing the process as a subjective experience, I found a way to

prevent implantation of the fertilised egg. The result is that I have not become pregnant for twenty years although I am in a sexually active marriage and do not abstain at any particular time of the menstrual cycle, do not use any other form of contraception, and have no reason to believe that either myself or my partner are biologically infertile.

At first I was so delighted to have "discovered" this approach to birth control that I simply practised it quietly and engaged the demanding task of parenting four young children, re-engaging my career in counselling as time allowed. Drawn increasingly to reading the literature on Jungian psychology, I began to find references to the archetypal feminine, the Great Mother, the goddess in her many forms. The feminine mysteries of ages past have been reappearing in the form of archaic figures emerging from archeological excavations, in the form of images and stories of the goddesses of Old Europe and ancient Greece, and in the form of books and papers on the archetype of the feminine. Could my experience of internal regulation of fertility be understood in this context? Are there other women whose subjective experiences in this area challenge contemporary reproductive beliefs and practices? How might this phenomenon be understood?

The information about the reemerging feminine principle was familiar from the inner musings that had led to my birth control practice, and, over time, a combination of the literature, a series of dreams and the effect of the ongoing practice of true reproductive autonomy began to form an

understanding of some of the underlying factors involved in the radical birth control I was practising. There appeared to be a relationship between this experience and the collective interest generated by the feminine principle in archaeology, archetypal psychology, literature, and art. Consistent with emerging from the period of intensively parenting pre-school children, my understanding of my subjective experiences broadened and I became interested in the phenomenon as it related to contemporary culture and to ancient cultures. I began to actively seek other women who might have had similar experiences and to explore the literature for references to reproductive autonomy. It became important to find a context of meaning other than (as well as) the personal for my experience. The following chapters are the result of these investigations. This realm of experience has proven to be one that could only be investigated with a willingness to proceed organically and to be informed by the material as it came present.

This approach is consistent with Moustakas's (1990) description of "heuristic research" as

a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods for further investigation and analysis. The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge (p. 9).

Heuristic studies require a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated, and have been described as "a way of self-enquiry and

dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meanings of important human experiences" (Moustakas, 1990, p.15). This investigation is, therefore, a scientific search which involves self-enquiry as well as dialogue with others. It is not a scientific investigation to determine whether or not birth control *can* occur psycho-biologically (although there is considerable evidence from neuro-bio-chemical research that this is plausible). There are two main areas of focus: the subjective experience of women who report the practice of mind-body control of conception and an extensive review of the literature in several fields of human enquiry. Specifically, the objective of this thesis is to provide answers to the following questions:

- What is the subjective experience of women who report the practice of mind-body control of conception?
- What theoretical understandings offer insight into this phenomenon?
- What factors of meaning emerge from studying the subjective experience of women who can describe a practice of mind-body regulation of conception?

#### The question of methodology

Gathering information about people's subjective experience requires a methodology suited to the task. Psychology has traditionally modelled itself on the physical sciences, valuing an objective, behaviourist theoretical framework. Phenomenological psychology offers an alternative to this

approach, and is examined in more detail in the following chapters. Suffice it to say at this point, that fundamental to the phenomenological approach is the understanding that people's perspectives and subjective interpretations are not biases to be eliminated from the study, but are central to understanding their behaviour. This approach results in detailed, qualitative descriptions of subjective, intensely personal experiences, offering in-depth information about individual meaning and understandings. Using a phenomenological approach to study subjects who claim to practice an idiosyncratic behaviour (such as mind-body control of conception) results in data which can be combined to produce a composite of underlying factors that relate to this phenomenon.

The present study explores the subjective experience of women claiming to practice a particular behaviour which apparently has no observable, operational correlates. As there is nothing to investigate in this case except the participant's subjective experience, phenomenological theory offers the most appropriate strategies for gathering, analysing, and interpreting such data. The personal relevance to the researcher of the area of study extends the methodology into heuristic concepts and processes which are also explored in subsequent chapters.

### Theoretical background

Fertility has been a central issue in the structure of most human societies. There are countless references to fertility in the literature; not so birth control. According to our written history, control of conception has only

recently become an important issue. It is generally assumed that the advent of the contraceptive pill in the 1960's offered women their first freedom from the cycles of nature in pregnancy and childbirth. The scant references to natural birth control methods in our own historical background involve abstinence during pregnancy and lactation, and the use of vaginal sponges and abortifacient herbs or drugs (Davis, 1974; Walker, 1983). More recently, literature on natural birth control methods has mostly focused on predicting ovulation, and abstaining during this period (Billings & Westmore, 1980; Nofziger, 1976).

There are, however, indications from the literature that birth control has, in fact, been available throughout human history, and that current understanding or knowledge of this has been eclipsed by social, religious, and cultural factors. Specifically, this thesis investigates reports from psychology, history, mythology, anthropology, and biology for references to birth control per se, and especially psycho-biological methods of regulating conception. The literature has yielded few direct references, although there are many indirect references, suggesting actual practices and underlying processes. These references give the present study a cultural and historical perspective which is especially important in an area which impacts so strongly on the lives of women in what is a predominantly patriarchal culture. In fact, it is difficult to make sense of the processes and factors which may underlie any behaviour without considering the cultural and historical setting within which the behaviour occurs.

There are numerous examples from the study of linguistics which tell of people living in remote areas who have no words in their languages which are the equivalent of words familiar to people from other cultures (Sapir, 1949). The interesting observation is that without the words, the colours or shapes represented by the words do not exist for these people; when people with no word for "corner" are exposed to what a native English speaker would perceive as a right angle, they see a rounded curve. Researching and writing this paper has been like that; the idea of effective birth control before the contraceptive pill, and especially the idea of a method of conscious, psychological regulation of conception, with its implication of female reproductive autonomy, seems not to exist in the English language, and is, therefore, omitted from the literature. Yet, once the concept exists, there can also be found evidence of its existence. As neuroscientist, Candice Pert (1997), has written, "absence of proof is not proof of absence" (p. 222).

There *are* women who claim internal regulation of conception as a part of their lived experience (Jackson & Teague, 1978; Parvati, 1978; Rosenblum, 1976; Sjoö & Mor, 1987); there are, therefore, subjective reports of the reality of this idea. Yet, translating subjective lived experience into the language of objective consensus reality is at least as difficult as translating the works of a complex and subtle writer from one language to another. What nuances are missed, what hints overlooked in transposing the work from one form to another?

Writing about a topic such as internal regulation of conception requires using a language that is not suited to the purpose, reflecting conceptual structures which can barely grasp the significance of what it is being written. However, much that is currently being written in many areas of study is asking for a radical alteration of the understanding of the world, both inner and outer, psyche and matter. Investigating the concept and practice of a behaviour such as conscious, internal regulation of conception challenges culturally conditioned beliefs and attitudes, demanding a temporary suspension of disbelief and a preparedness to expand limited ways of thinking about and perceiving the world. This does not, however, seem an unreasonable requirement for research which seriously seeks to answer questions about relatively unexplored areas of human behaviour.

Even as the material presented in this paper challenges current consensus beliefs and attitudes about female reproductive autonomy, parts of it are also in contradiction to the position of some feminist writers and researchers. It seems that claiming reproductive independence has been fraught with difficulty for European women since recorded history. This paper explores the possibility of a psycho-biological method of birth control which, by its nature, offers true reproductive autonomy, and is, therefore problematical in the light of prevailing social, religious, and cultural beliefs. In his book on post-conceptive fertility control, Dr. Geoffrey Davis (1974) stated that "medicine has gone to some pains to convert it (fertility control) to an institutionalised matter of tortuous complexity and recoils as much from the idea of simple, painless

fertility control on request, as it did from the 'heresy' of anaesthesia for childbirth during the last century" (pp. 220-221). This viewpoint challenges the ostensibly logical and scientific justification for contemporary attitudes to female fertility control, suggesting a "covert complex of religious, ethical, and personal factors" (p. 205).

Reports of a phenomenon such as conscious, internal regulation of conception are frequent enough to require serious investigation on a number of levels. There is obviously a whole area of psycho-biological investigation which is not the focus of the present study. This thesis focuses on a theoretical, phenomenological, and heuristic analysis of this phenomenon. It is my contention that scientific research into human behaviour must be grounded in the subjective experience of the individuals involved in order to truly understand the meaning of the phenomena under study. If women report experiences of regulating conception through an internal process, what are they doing, how are they doing it, and how did they know what to do? If this is really possible, then how is it that most women do not do this? Have they forgotten how? Did they ever know? What was it they may have known? How did they forget? What are the implications of remembering? These questions serve to ground the study firmly in the very real issues of reproductive autonomy for women.

In investigating these and other questions, Chapter 2 considers the feminine principle from the perspective of analytical psychology, exploring the

archetype of the feminine and the implications of theories of masculine and feminine creativity which arise from both analytical and psychoanalytical literature. Phenomenological psychology is also discussed in terms of the intrapsychic processes which constitute subjective experience, with particular reference to the conscious awareness of previously unconscious elements. Chapter 3 presents information from history, mythology, archaeology, and anthropology regarding reproductive practices and the cultural and historical influences which affect these; the feminine principle and the practice of reproductive autonomy is also considered from these perspectives. The contribution of biological science, especially psychoneuroimmunology is explored in terms of mind-body communication in Chapter 4. These areas of study offer both a theoretical and methodological framework for the present study, suggesting possible explanations of the phenomenon of psychobiological birth control, and also placing this study in a cultural and historical context. The questions investigated in this paper do not exist as isolated abstractions about human behaviour; they are questions about the living experience of women. Some preliminary answers, and further questions, are presented in the following chapters, separated somewhat artificially and unsuccessfully, into the different areas of study. Artificially because it is becoming increasingly obvious that the overlap and interaction between all fields of human research and discovery must be respected, and unsuccessfully because some of the overlap just would not separate out for the neatness of the chapters!

The specific focus of the present thesis is, then, an investigation of a method of psycho-biological birth control (conscious, internal regulation of conception) from a theoretical perspective, through the analysis of recorded interviews with women describing their experience of this method of birth control, and through the self-enquiry of the author. The heuristic approach to self enquiry is discussed in Chapter 5, with an analysis of personal data in the form of dreams, self-reflective writing, and images recorded during the work on the thesis. The methodological considerations of exploring subjective experience are outlined in Chapter 6, with reference to the chronological development of the research strategy. The actual research process presented in Chapter 7 involves three stages of data gathering and sorting, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. The implications of the findings for explaining the experience of conscious internal regulation of fertility are discussed in Chapter 8.

If even one woman claims to be successfully practising this method of regulating conception, it is a phenomenon worthy of investigation. If several women who claim to practise this method of birth control describe their subjective experience of this process in words and phrases that reveal common themes, it is suggestive of a larger occurrence. This study is a preliminary investigation of a phenomenon which may have far reaching implications in areas of fertility and infertility, and for true reproductive autonomy for women, as well as contributing to the rapidly increasing understanding of mind-body communication.

In the words of Jungian analyst, Irene Claremont de Castillejo (1973),

since the advent of Freud, man's whole attitude towards sexuality has begun to change. It seems that he has more or less digested the apple from the tree of knowledge of good and evil given him by Eve, and, stretching out his hand to the same tree, has plucked a second apple and this time it is he who has offered it to her. He has discovered the contraceptive ..... It was Eve who freed Adam from the blindness of nature. Now Adam had freed Eve from the inexorability of its rhythmical wheel (p. 92).

It is, in fact, questionable whether contemporary contraceptive practices have freed Eve, or have, very subtly, bound her to the inexorability of science and linearity rather than the cyclical inexorability of nature. The information in this thesis suggests that nature is not necessarily blind, but can, in fact, offer a very different way of seeing. In exploring themes of fertility and birth control, which have their roots in ancient feminine mysteries and traditions, the following chapters weave a tapestry of historical events, philosophical and psychological understandings. In the words of a biographer of Emily Dickinson,

I have had to tell the story, not as one draws a line from left to right, marking birth at the left, and death at the right, but as one ponders while he turns a relic over and over in his hands

(Taggard, 1967, p. ix).

## CHAPTER TWO

### Contributions of psychological theory

What does psychology have to offer this exploration? As a science with its roots in philosophy, it has a somewhat confused identity; a diverse, and divergent, collection of people and practices are gathered under the umbrella of psychology. It is depth psychology, with its respect for the importance of intra-psychic dynamics, both conscious and unconscious, that first drew my attention in relation to my own personal experiences. How did I know to do what I did, when there was no apparent external support for my idiosyncratic approach to birth control? Where do such ideas come from? What is the psychology of procreation? How does psychology explain the development of the capacity to reflect consciously about previously unconscious processes? I have looked to analytical psychology (Harding, 1973; Jung, *Collected Works*; Neumann, 1991), psycho-analytic theory (Fromm, 1957; Horney, 1967); and phenomenological psychology (Husserl, 1931; 1970; 1977; Maslow, 1954; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; 1964; 1968) for contributions. Inevitably I have been informed by the theories that make sense of my own experiences, and also those that provide meaningful explanations for the prevailing cultural attitudes

to issues of fertility management.

### Depth psychology

Based on the work of C.G. Jung, analytical psychology has described the concept of the feminine principle (Neumann, 1991) as the construct underlying fertility and reproduction, thus offering a basis for describing psychological processes which may be related to women's subjective experiences of this area. The analytic tradition has also offered models of personality development which incorporate the idea of conscious control of previously unconscious processes (Harding, 1973; Neumann, 1991). From a slightly different perspective, psychoanalytic theory offers psychological insight into the historical perspective of female reproductive autonomy, as well as a description of dynamics relevant to fertility control. Most notably, the works of Fromm (1951) and Horney (1967) have explored the idea of creation vs procreation and the role of male envy in determining attitudes to fertility control.

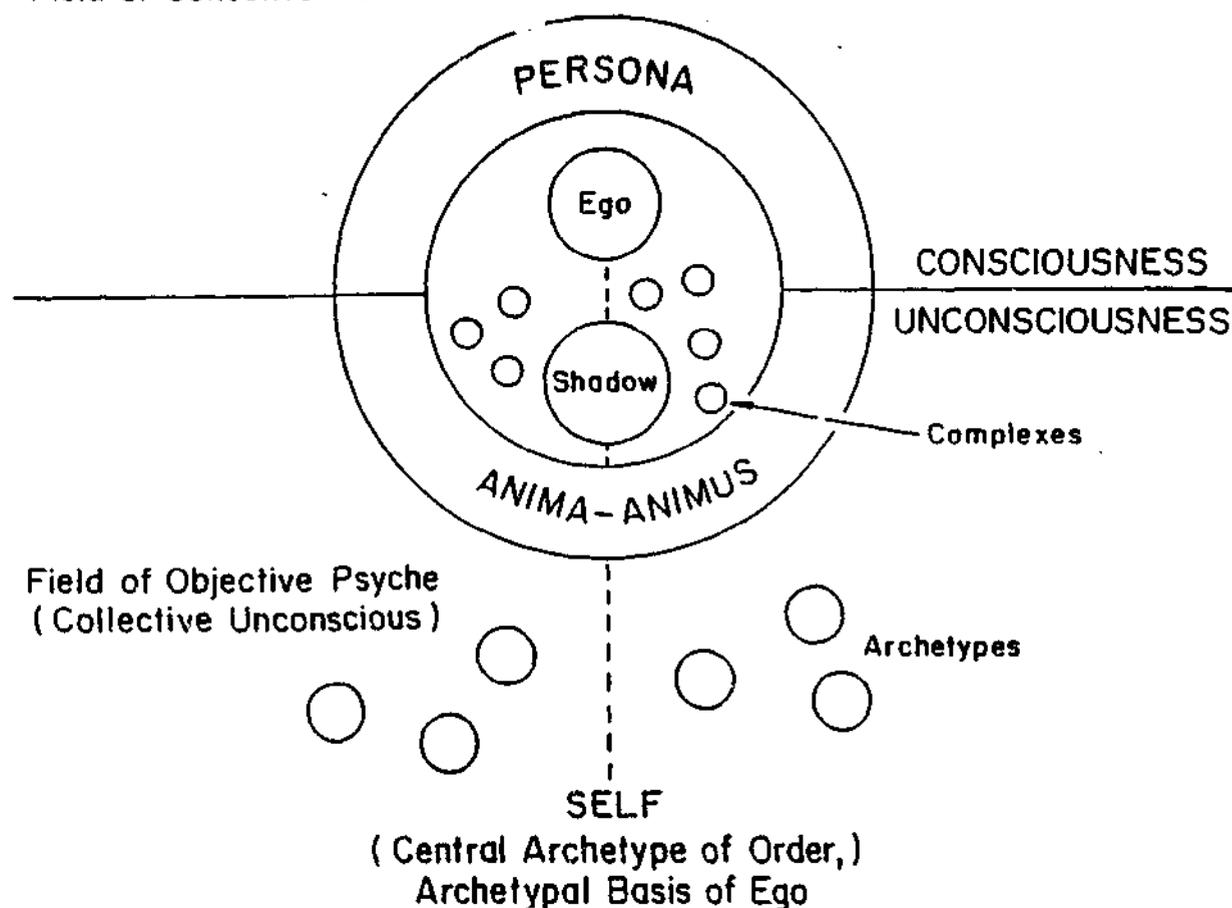
In his "re-visioning" of psychology, James Hillman (1975) proposed that the soul (psyche) asks for logos, to understand itself, and that this is the basic meaning of "psych - o - logy". The word "soul", however, eludes reductionist definition, suggesting a mystery which is not easily explained. This mystery connects psychology to religion, love, birth, and death, and leads beyond the study of observable behaviour to a contemplation of the depths of human experience. Depth and mystery are central to analytical psychology, which

"seeks out the images in events that give rise to meaningfulness, value, and the full range of experience" (Moore, 1989, p. 15).

Some of the most profound "images in events" have arisen from C.G. Jung's concept of the archetype, that which is "manifested principally in the fact that it determines human behaviour unconsciously but in accordance with laws and independently of the individual" (Neumann, 1991, p. 4). This idea is not new; long before Jung, Plato discussed "a priori" thought forms, original templates for all that exists. Jung, however, introduced Western psychology to the concept of a collective unconscious (or objective psyche), calling attention to the objective reality of the inner depths of the human psyche by studying the commonality of symbols and rituals in history and mythology. In Jung's model of the psyche, the personal layers, both conscious and unconscious, rest upon an archetypal foundation in the collective unconscious. Archetypes are described as a priori conditioning factors which represent a special, psychological instance of the biological patterns of behaviour which give all living creatures their specific qualities (Jung, CW, vol. 11).

James Hall (1986), a Jungian analyst and theorist, has offered the following Jungian model of the psyche.

## Field of Collective Consciousness



**Figure 1.** Jungian model of the psyche (Hall, 1986).

In this model, the archetypes (a structural concept) are depicted as the "contents" of the objective psyche (a topographical concept). There is, however, an ongoing debate about the actual location of this archetypal foundation. While Plato proposed an a priori realm separate from embodied experience, Jung's work locates archetypes both within the body and also psychically. Stevens (1997) proposed that "Jung's hypothesis of the archetype in fact transcended the nature-versus-nurture debate and healed the Cartesian split between mind and body" (p. 13). This claim is supported by

Jung's description of the "psychoid" aspect of the archetype as that which is "analogous to the position of physiological instinct, which is immediately rooted in the stuff of the organism and, with its psychoid nature, forms the bridge to matter in general" (CW, vol. 8, para. 420).

This debate does have important implications for the present investigation. A *psycho-biological* process involves both *psyche* and *body*, together; it is not about one acting on the other (as in "mind over matter") but about a mutually interactive event. This idea of mind-body as a mutually interactive event or process is not, however, consistent with our cultural philosophical heritage. For Plato, as for Socrates, the psyche became that part of oneself which turned away from embodied experience to contemplate intelligible ideas, the a priori forms that are pure and eternal. While Plato was still willing to venture into nature (Phaedrus, trans. 1982), albeit with ambivalence, Rene Descartes showed no such inclination in his now famous separation of the thinking mind from the material world. Descartes's *Meditations*, published in 1641, effectively removed subjective embodied experience from objective science, paving the way for the knowledge, technologies, and underlying assumptions of "reality" in our contemporary world. While Jung used the word "objective" to describe the collective psyche from which archetypal forms emerge, it seems that he was attempting to emphasise the living reality of archetypal experience rather than wanting to objectify it in the mathematically deterministic sense. Jung's synthesis suggested that "in archetypal conceptions and instinctual perceptions, spirit

and matter confront one another on the psychic plane" (CW, vol. 8, para. 240).

The idea of archetypal psychology that behaviour and experience are guided and controlled by forces which are not personal has been described in many ways. Anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss (1967), has intensively studied what he calls "unconscious infrastructures", the forms which emerge from collective phenomena. Ethologist, Niko Tinbergen (1951), described "innate releasing mechanisms" (IRMs), structures in the central nervous system which are primed to activate when an appropriate stimulus is encountered in the environment. I am reminded of my grand-daughter's first visit to the bush when she was only a few weeks old. A flight of birds, disturbed by our passing, suddenly lifted into the air and the image of their forms outlined against the sky was reflected in her eyes as she watched the movement. I could imagine this timeless image activating a pattern of response in her system that resonates with Jung's description of the archetype as "an inherited mode of functioning, corresponding to the inborn way in which the chick emerges from the egg, the bird builds its nest, a certain kind of wasp stings the motor ganglion of the caterpillar, and eels find their way to the Bermudas" (CW, vol. 18, para. 1228), or when he wrote that "the primordial image might suitably be described as the *instinct's perception of itself*, or as the self-portrait of the instinct" (CW, vol. 8, para. 277).

The full significance of Jung's archetypal hypothesis is best approached

through his own work in the area (CW, vol. 8; CW, vol. 9i) and through the work of several Jungian analysts and writers (Adler, 1966; Hall, 1989; Hannah, 1981; Neumann, 1991; Stevens, 1997; Whitmont, 1991). Neumann suggested that in order to explain what analytical psychology means by an archetype, it is necessary to distinguish the emotional-dynamic components, the symbolism, the material component, and the structure of the archetype. The dynamic involves the intra-psychic processes which can appear as strong positive or negative emotion, in fascinations, compulsions, and projections, and in anxiety and other disturbing internal states. The symbolism of the archetype is its manifestation in consciously perceived psychic images which are specific to each archetype, although different from person to person. The material component of the archetype is the sense content which is consciously experienced, while the structure includes all of these elements with the archetype itself at the centre. These elements are certainly identifiable in my experience of psycho-biological fertility management. There was strong emotion involved in the initial stages of developing the practice, and the process of developing the practice and then investigating it has been compelling; there are images which relate specifically to this experience and which seem to have collective as well as personal meaning; and the sense content as I consciously experience it has formed the basis for this work. Can archetypal psychology, therefore, offer ways to understand and explain the experience of internal regulation of fertility?

Archetypal psychology certainly offers a way to explore and elaborate

the feminine principle which is central to an understanding of reproduction and birth control. It also offers the understanding that the archetypal manifestation (through sensation, affect, images, and inner promptings) "depends not only on the race, people, and group, the historical epoch and actual situation, but also on the situation of the individual in whom it appears" (Neumann, 1991, p. 10). What this means is that the situation of an individual, her unconscious processes, her conscious attitude, her age, and so on will, at least in part, determine the archetypal experience. While this is not particularly distinct from any number of psychological theories of behaviour, archetypal psychology also says that the collective influences in any given time and place will also influence the archetypal manifestation. This can best be demonstrated through an exploration of the archetype of the feminine principle.

#### The archetype of the feminine principle

The collective emergence of the "conscious feminine" (Zweig, 1990) is a phenomenon of increasing importance, reflected in the growing interest in the study of early matrilineal and matrifocal cultures, of the ancient religions which worshipped female deities (goddesses), and of mythology. There is an abundance of literature presenting views of the feminine principle from these perspectives (Bolen, 1984; Eliade, 1965; Gadon, 1989; Johnson, 1989; Neumann, 1991; Stone, 1979; Walker, 1983; Whitmont, 1982), an area of study so widespread as to indicate a truly collective phenomenon. It has been called a new mythologem, the myth of the ancient Goddess "who once ruled earth and heaven before the advent of the patriarchy and of the patriarchal

religions", arising in response to "the low point of a cultural development that has led us into the deadlock of scientific materialism, technological destructiveness, religious nihilism and spiritual impoverishment" (Whitmont, 1982, p. vii). While this new mythologem has been criticised as "contemporary romantic feminism" (Mortley, 1981, p.1) by authors who question the idea that the sex of the principal deity can be correlated with the value systems of his/her followers, there is no doubt that this idea holds profound symbolic meaning in the current explorations of the archetypal feminine. The religious and philosophical teachings of Judaism, Gnosticism, Christianity, and Islam are directly challenged by current studies of the feminine principle, suggesting a fundamental shift from patriarchal consciousness.

The idea of the collective emergence of the "conscious feminine" has direct relevance to the current exploration as female reproductive autonomy is rapidly becoming an historical curiosity while the functions of the womb are replaced by genetic engineering and technological advances. The following chapters trace the history of birth control from ancient times to the present day, describing how an area which was once the exclusive domain of women's practices, has become the province of rational, scientific practice. While the emphasis of this thesis is not on divisiveness between masculine and feminine principles, the historical record does not reflect well on the religious and scientific takeover of women's fertility and birth practices.

Books and papers on the feminine principle in the form of goddess

worship and studies of ancient rites and rituals are appearing in ever increasing numbers. What is the "feminine" of which they are all an expression? Does this feminine principle have something to do with the experience of conscious, internal regulation of conception? Can this be understood as a feminine function? The feminine principle is understood to be present in men and women, although analytical psychology suggests that women are granted special access;

it is primarily women who need to keep in contact with the springs of life, with the inseparable connection of all growing things and their eternal continuity: spring, summer, autumn and winter, followed eternally by another spring (de Castillejo, 1973, p 57).

It is often through the functions of the womb that woman senses this "eternal continuity", and through woman that man, in turn, finds it. The earliest human attempts to record the passage of time appear to be sticks marked with the lunar (or menstrual) cycle (Gimbutas, 1989). Woman has a built-in cycle which connects her to the process of change, shedding the old to allow the growth of the new. It may be a little difficult to catch the rhythm of the cycle if it has been disrupted by contraceptive chemicals or stress, although it continues regardless. Conception, and therefore contraception, are traditionally the domains of the feminine. In many cultures it has been thought that for woman "to bear a child is the pact between her and the female Power of the earth" (Lee, 1989, p. ix).

It may well be that in exploring the feminine principle, psychological

research can re-engage the meaning and depth of psyche as an embodied experience, promoting greater involvement with the everyday experience of the world rather than designing the definitive experiment, or refining tools of measurement and analysis. Ecologist and philosopher, David Abram (1996) described this eloquently;

the everyday world in which we hunger and make love is hardly the mathematically determined "object" toward which the sciences direct themselves. Despite all the mechanical artefacts that now surround us, the world in which we find ourselves before we set out to calculate and measure it is not an inert or mechanical object but a living field, an open and dynamic landscape subject to its own moods and metamorphoses (p. 32).

Both psychoanalytic theory and the understandings of analytical psychology have contributed fundamentally to the perspective that subjective experience can lead inwards to a world of uncharted territory, rich with sights, sounds and sensations. Archetypal psychology offers a perspective which I have found personally meaningful in my search to make sense of my experience of psycho-biological birth control, and which contributes a basis for a theoretical understanding of this phenomenon.

It is from archetypal reality that the images of the feminine principle emerge, as pictures and symbols arising across cultures since the earliest times of human existence. In any study of the feminine principle, it soon becomes obvious that there are different aspects of this phenomenon called

the feminine, making it difficult, and confusing, to speak of the feminine as one entity. I am indebted to Neumann's (1991) analysis of the archetype of the Great Mother, in which he delineated two fundamental characters of the feminine: the elementary character and the transformative character.

Before further exploring Neumann's analysis of the feminine, it is, however, important to note that Neumann's description of the Great Mother was "based on post-Indo-European religious ideology, after the image of the Goddess had suffered a profound and largely debasing transformation" (Gimbutas, 1989, p. 316). This criticism has also been extended to Jungian psychology more generally (Sjoo & Mor, 1987). The profound study of the feminine principle offered by Jungian psychology does, however, advance a basis for describing otherwise invisible, unknowable processes of the human psyche. The following descriptions are not, therefore, presented as definitive portraits of the nature of *woman*, but as a theoretical basis for understanding the feminine *principle* and what this can contribute to exploring the idea and experience of female reproductive autonomy. Analytical psychology clearly states that as principles, the masculine and feminine functions operate in both men and women; "when the cultural situation is determined by the psychological dominance of one sex, as in ..... patriarchy, ..... the male position of consciousness and its development apply also to the modern woman, who has developed and must develop a contemporary consciousness" (Neumann, 1991, p. 24). In other words, the feminine principles described here can be, and are, developed by males when this is



the cultural requirement (as, perhaps, in a matrifocal culture), while the masculine principles described in the following paragraph can be, and are, developed by females in a patriarchal culture such as our own. Therefore, the distinction between masculine and feminine principles is not determined by gender alone, but involves the historical background and culture in which a person lives. Neumann proposed that "the archetypal world is in this sense exemplary. It draws its documentation from the male as well as the female psychology of the group and the individual" (p. 95).

Neumann (1991) also advised that

the study of archetypes involves an abundance of symbolic material from the most diverse cultural strata and spheres; it compels the psychologist to delve into many different fields in which he is not specialised. In each of these fields the material is so vast that an outsider cannot hope to master it entirely. Errors and faulty interpretations - particularly in matters of detail - are almost inevitable ..... The provisional and problematic nature of such work is therefore obvious and we can only appeal to the insight and indulgence of the reader who is more concerned with a synthesis of essentials than with the correctness of every single detail (p. 92).

He did, however, claim an advantage for psychotherapists;

the interpretation of the symbolism of the unconscious in modern man - and the symbolism of the unconscious remains unchanged - gives the psychotherapist an empirical-scientific foundation for the interpretation of collective symbolism (p. 92).

Based on the study of collective symbolism, Neumann described the



elementary character as that aspect of the feminine principle which "tends to hold fast to everything that springs from it and to surround it like an eternal substance" (p. 25). The foundations for this description are to be found in the phenomenon of psychic gravitation, the natural inertia that causes certain contents of the unconscious to remain unconscious and certain contents of consciousness to become unconscious. It is this pull to unconsciousness that is described as the basis of the elementary character of the feminine. This aspect is obvious wherever the ego and consciousness are still undeveloped and the unconscious dominant, as in certain stages of human development. The ego, consciousness, and the individual, male or female, are childlike and dependent in their relation to the elementary character of the feminine principle; it is the "foundation of that conservative, stable and unchanging part of the feminine which predominates in motherhood" (p. 26). Analytical psychology has proposed that as consciousness develops, it tends to form an independent and relatively self-contained system with the ego complex at its centre. When consciousness is sufficiently charged, a content remains in it; the content is conscious and open to consciousness. When the charge in the conscious system diminishes and is reduced, its contents respond to attraction by the more highly charged contents of the unconscious. It is this tendency toward unconsciousness which underlies the elementary character of the feminine principle.

It has been noted that feminist authors and researchers are increasingly critical of this description of the elementary character of the

feminine, although it seems that these reservations with Neumann's formulation may arise from a misunderstanding of his intentions. Nowhere does Neumann claim that the elementary nature is a description of woman, but that it is a description of a function present in both men and women, representative of an underlying principle. So, too, with the transformative character of the feminine principle. My reservation with Neumann's work in this area arises from the assumption of a hierarchical structure of consciousness, with the implication that the elementary character is lower on the developmental scale than the transformative. I prefer to understand the two as descriptions of different forms of consciousness, both serving a vital function in the human experience for males and females alike.

Neumann (1991) described the transformative character of the feminine as the expression of a different fundamental psychic constellation, with an emphasis on the dynamic element of the psyche, driving towards motion, change, and transformation. Obviously, the process of life intrinsically involves transformation, yet the elementary character functions to turn everything that changes back into its own eternal sameness. In psychological terms, the elementary character determines that all processes of change take place in the unconscious. As the personality is differentiated and emerges from pure unconsciousness, the transformative character is experienced independently, driving toward development, bringing movement and unrest. The transformative function of the feminine is to transform energy into life, to gestate and produce new forms.

Neumann (1991) suggested that women may experience the transformative character naturally and unreflectively in menstruation, pregnancy, and childbearing, and in the compelling tension and change inherent in relationship. It is only when a woman learns to reflect on her nature that she experiences the transformative character consciously, and can fully participate in the experience of change and development. This distinction between the transformative character of the feminine as an unreflective function and as a conscious function has been important in my understanding of how my approach to fertility management developed. I had emerged from a period of pregnancy, childbirth, and nurturing which was consistent with the description of aspects of the elementary character of the feminine, into a period of unrest which was driving towards development and transformation. It is also interesting to note that my capacity to engage this new phase reflectively has developed over time, from the initial self-enquiry necessary to develop the actual psychobiological birth control practice to the exploration of the wider implications of this practice delineated in this thesis.

Neumann's work can also offer understandings relevant to reproductive experiences more generally. It seems that while he was proposing that the transformative character is inherently present in women, only some women experience it reflectively or consciously. It is in this way that this analysis of the feminine principle offers a psychological model for understanding how some women may be able to consciously regulate a biological process that is unreflective for others. In line with this, it would be expected that an analysis

of subjective intra-psychic processes (through verbal reports of subjective experience and exploring the images and symbols in dreams and imagination) may lead to a deeper understanding of these processes. There was clearly a shift from relatively unconscious, automatic behaviour to a more reflective, consciously considered approach to fertility in my experience. Is this something that other women have experienced? Does this idea of the transformative function make sense of women's experience of psycho-biological birth control?

Cultural conditions: creation vs procreation

In considering the idea of the feminine principle, it is important to remember that there are historical and cultural conditions to be considered alongside psychological principles in understanding the dynamics of a behaviour. It has, for example, been argued by contemporary feminist writers that the activities of reproduction *cannot* represent conscious creativity. Simone de Beauvoir (1952) suggested that "the woman who gave birth, therefore, did not know the pride of creation; she felt herself the plaything of obscure forces ..... But in any case giving birth and suckling are not activities, they are natural functions; no project is involved ....." (p. 71). In her examination of the issue of "creativity vs generativity", Erica Jong (1979) proposed that creativity "demands conscious, active will", while pregnancy requires "only the absence of ill-will" (p. 27) toward the foetus. And once again, de Beauvoir,

ensnared by nature, the pregnant woman is plant and animal, a stockpile of colloids, an incubator, an egg ..... Ordinarily life is

but a condition of existence; in gestation it appears as creative; but that is a strange kind of creation which is accomplished in a contingent and passive manner (p. 467).

These statements are describing reproduction as an unconscious function of nature, consistent with Neumann's (1991) depiction of the elementary character of the feminine. In this description there is no room for conscious participation in, or control of, the process. It is ironical that writers such as de Beauvoir and Jong, whose work has been understood to empower women, seem, in fact, to have reinforced the culturally conditioned view of reproduction as "ensnarement by nature". This view ignores the reproductive choice which seems to be peculiar to the human female. Although fertilisation can only occur for a short period during each menstrual cycle, the human female is remarkable by being the only mammal with no marked oestrus, the short period of sexual receptivity which occurs only with ovulation for other mammals. Therefore, for human females, sexual receptivity is not directly related to ovulation or procreation, a biological fact which seems to be overlooked by these women who perceive themselves as bound to the inexorable cycles of nature.

From the perspective of writers such as de Beauvoir and Jong, creativity requires an activity or project which is not simply a natural function but which involves conscious, active will, thus rendering procreation something other than creativity in this sense. Perhaps they are giving voice to a disenfranchisement which occurred many thousands of years ago, when the

reverence for feminine creativity was replaced by reverence for a pantheon of gods ruled by one male deity, and eventually reverence for a monotheistic male deity, so that the experience of being "the plaything of obscure forces" may well be more an expression of historically and culturally determined factors rather than the inevitable feminine experience of pregnancy. In a psychological sense, the historical shift has been from one polarity (feminine principle) to the opposite (masculine principle), and the current collective re-emergence of the "conscious feminine" is yet another shift.

#### The masculine principle

The distinctions between the elementary and transformative functions of the feminine illustrate the diversity of the feminine principle. It does seem that some understanding of the idea of conscious regulation of conception is to be found in this diversity, although it is also possible that the elements of the masculine principle as it exists in woman may also have something to offer this inquiry. Just as the elements of the feminine principle emerge from archetypal reality, so do descriptions of the elements of the masculine principle. Edward Whitmont (1982) has explored this from the perspective of patriarchal myths, suggesting that these myths still underlie the modern world view, although they have been rationalised into "unconscious fantasy premises", which "determine our conscious ethos, our social values, and our modern religion, which now goes under the name of science" (p. 78).



The basic character of the archetypal masculine has been described as rationalising, abstracting, and controlling, and is personified in God as King: Jehovah in Israel, Allah in the Islamic world, and Zeus in ancient Greece. Psychologically, the masculine principle represents a sense of individual focus, and a capacity for rational intentionality and personal will; a sense of personal identity which rests in a separate self answerable to the law of the God-king. The archetypal masculine has, then, been described as focused, divisive, and assertive. In contrast, the archetypal feminine has been described as diffuse, connective, and receptive. Jung described the masculine aspects of consciousness as involving an interest in objective facts and their interconnections, including the wide fields of commerce, politics, technology, and science, in contrast to the "minute consciousness of personal relationships, the infinite nuances of which usually escape (the masculine consciousness) entirely" (CW, vol. 7, para. 330).

Neumann (1991) has stated that "patriarchal consciousness starts from the standpoint that the spirit is eternal a priori; that the spirit was in the beginning", and from this position "proceeds to deny the genetic principle, which is precisely the basic principle of the matriarchal world" (p. 58). This reflects the philosophical stance of Socrates, Plato and Descartes in which all that is pure and constant is incorporeal, with no place for subjective embodied experience. Neumann has elaborated an inherent paradox in patriarchal consciousness; "unless the male spirit is able ..... as in mathematics ..... to construct a purely abstract world, it must make use of the nature symbols



originating in the unconscious" (p. 50). As symbols of the feminine principle, however, the nature symbols are antithetical to patriarchal consciousness which attempts to distort and degrade them. Evidence of the takeover of creativity from the feminine processes of procreation can be found in ordinary English language, which provides "instances of the general metaphor that CREATION IS BIRTH" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1981). The following sentences offer examples of words relating to the feminine function of procreation being applied to activities or projects of creation;

Our nation was *born* out of a desire for freedom.

His writings are products of his *fertile* imagination.

His experiments *spawned* a host of new theories.

Your actions will only *breed* violence.

He *hatched* a clever scheme.

He *conceived* a brilliant theory of molecular motion.

Universities are *incubators* for new ideas.

The theory of relativity first saw *the light of day* in 1905.

The University of Chicago was the *birthplace* of the nuclear bomb.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1981, pp. 74-75)

It has been argued that the absence of an equivalent set of expressions using words like project, penetrate, erect, and ejaculate, suggests that the root metaphor for creativity in the English speaking world is "procreation", a predominantly feminine function. What this example also illustrates, however, is that the function of creativity has been translated into activities and projects

characterised by masculine principles, leaving the feminine principle without the "pride of creation", the very idea evident in the writings of Jung and de Beauvoir.

### Masculine and feminine creativity

The differences in the descriptions of masculine and feminine principles, and the predominance of masculine principles in the current cultural context, have important implications for the capacity of women to experience "the pride of creation" through reproduction. The distortion and degrading of the natural character of unconscious symbols to fit a masculine consciousness leaves women (and men) without an inherent connection to the life-giving power of the feminine principle. This shift of value from procreation to creation is explored further in the chapter on mythology. From a psychological perspective, it may, however, be that as long as both remain unreflective, masculine creativity (as a "conscious" project or activity) can be seen as the expression of spirit as a transpersonal principle, and feminine creativity (as procreation) can be seen as the expression of matter as a transpersonal principle, with neither representing a conscious, personal, creative act. In this case, "the pride of creation" intrinsically rests with neither masculine nor feminine principles.

This can be understood from at least two different psychological perspectives. The psychoanalytic view of male creativity draws on the basic idea that men want to create objects of value from within their bodies. A

number of theorists have suggested that man's desire for mental and artistic creativity arises, at least in part, from the wish to conceive or produce as women do in pregnancy and parturition (Fromm, 1951; Horney, 1967). Psychoanalyst, Karen Horney (1967), has suggested that the "strength in men of the creative impulse in every field" may be due to "their feeling of playing a relatively small part in the creation of living things" (p. 61). This view offers psychological insight into the historical takeover of the power and mystery of the feminine role in procreation by masculine principles during the historical transition from matrifocal to patriarchal values over the last 5000 years. The effects of this transition on women's ability to regulate the rhythms and cycles of their own bodies is central to an understanding of the historical context of birth control practices. If the capacity to consciously regulate conception did once exist, it is conceivable that this, and other female "mysteries", may well have been lost during this transition, resulting in the current collective ignorance of such a practice.

A second perspective, with a basis in analytical rather than psychoanalytical theory, is that the absence of the "pride of creation" in pregnancy and nurturing may be a true reflection of the undifferentiated nature of these processes, and that an opportunity exists to develop conscious awareness of a previously unconscious process, a critical threshold in the development of human consciousness, as described by Neumann (1991). This follows the earlier discussion of the possibility of the transformative character of the feminine operating either unreflectively or reflectively. As one

aspect of the transformative character, procreation can, therefore, be experienced either reflectively or unreflectively. From this perspective, women have the opportunity to develop the transformative function of the feminine, and so to participate consciously in a previously unreflective process such as procreation.

Central to this proposition of participating consciously in a previously unreflective process, is the difference between conscious reflection and unconscious identification with a function. Once again, it is in analytical psychology that an elaboration of this difference can be found. Jungian analyst, M. Esther Harding (1973), has offered a description of the development of consciousness through three phases of development: the naive stage of consciousness, the ego stage, and the stage of consciousness of the Self. In this context, the term "Self" describes Jung's concept of the centre of psychic awareness that transcends ego consciousness and includes in its scope the totality of the psyche, conscious and unconscious, personal and transpersonal (CW, vol. 9ii; Hall, 1986).

The naive stage of consciousness is described as the stage where instinctual drives dominate the functioning; where the personal hunger for food, sexual satisfaction, security, or dominance arouses an urgent and compulsive demand. Harding (1973) described this urge as nonpersonal in that it functions apart from conscious control and is concerned only with the continuance of life, and with the survival of the race rather than of the

individual. This is the stage of the compulsive "I want" of the infant, which is completely identified with bodily necessities.

The ego stage of consciousness develops as part of the nonpersonal, instinctive energy is redeemed from its purely biological orientation and released for more conscious aims. In this way the personal consciousness, that which an individual calls "I", is formed. Despite the subjective experience of this "I" as the whole psyche, it is actually a very small part, with the rest remaining largely unconscious and nonpersonal. This is, of course, the basis of psychodynamic theory which describes how hidden desires and impulses of primitive instinct lie behind a socially conventional appearance. The largely unconscious, nonpersonal psyche is what Jung called the objective psyche, as it is as much an object to the observing "I" as are objects in the outer world (it is just as real). In the ego stage of development, attention is wholly directed to controlling the environment for personal satisfaction and advantage. There is some control over instinctive drives, although everything is classified according to personal likes and dislikes, with rejected psychic material falling into unconsciousness.

In the third stage of consciousness, one experiences a centre of nonpersonal compelling power (the Self), distinct from the ego, and possessing absolute authority within the psyche. When an individual is able to differentiate between the personal self, or ego, and the Self as centre of the psyche, there arises a predominant concern for the development of the

psyche and of humankind. Harding (1973) made it clear that a complete replacement of one stage by the next is neither possible nor desirable in human life. The urges of the body and the desires of the ego are essential to human existence, and the process of developing consciousness involves a modification rather than an annihilation of instinctual and ego impulses.

It seems obvious that identification with instinctual and ego impulses is not consistent with the experience of mind-body control of fertility. The basic assumption of conscious regulation of ordinarily unconscious, automatic processes implies the sort of intra-psychic transformation described by Harding. Is this so for women whose subjective experience involves the practice of internal regulation of fertility? If this is so, how did this transformation happen for these women? Why these women?

Harding's model of developing consciousness assumes that a transformation, a radical change in inner psychic dynamics can and does take place. Analytical psychology recognises that such transformations are necessary if a therapeutic analysis is to meet with success. This process of transformation is not, however, widely accepted in Western psychology, and is difficult to describe in an objective way because the changes that takes place are largely subjective, a change in inner dynamics, reactions and impulses. Jungian psychology has offered a description of this process of transformation through addressing the problem of the opposites (CW, vol. 7). Clinical observation in analysis has yielded the following description of the problem of

opposites. Inner transformation is often initiated by a frustration of basic instinctive drives, an impasse that stimulates the impulse to reflection. By reflecting on the situation, a person discovers the opposing elements, thereby increasing the conflict, and demanding further reflection. Through this process, psychic energy is turned inwards and begins to exercise its creative or transformative function within. If both sides of a conflict can be held in consciousness, a solution arises by releasing the creative power in the unconscious, whereby the opposites within can be reconciled. Meanwhile, the capacity for reflecting on a previously unconscious inner process has been developed and is increased with each encounter with inner conflict.

This description certainly resonates with my experience of internal reflection on the problem of reproductive autonomy. One description of my experience is that my basic, instinctual drive to procreate was frustrated by a lack of available resources such as money and energy. This impasse led to a process of reflection, considering the issue from many angles and discovering the opposing forces of "Nature" insisting on further reproduction and some sense of "I" resisting this, and this whole process cycling through further conflict and reflection. Have other women who describe conscious regulation of fertility engaged this sort of process? This question implies another question about women who do not describe this sort of reproductive autonomy. It may be that the process of conscious reflection is what is missing for women who experience procreation as devoid of "the pride of creation"; there is no reconciliation of the unconscious or instinctive desire of the



elementary character of the feminine with the awakening consciousness of the transformative character of the feminine.

Consistent with the idea of the transformative character of the feminine principle, Emily Martin (1987), in her cultural analysis of reproduction, presented a range of "new key metaphors, core symbols of birth", describing a "process that develops from within and the continuity of this process with the past and future" (p. 157). In this context, the pregnant and nurturant woman is seen as an initiate, undertaking a transformative rite of passage, "an event to which a ..... woman relates intimately and uniquely, weaving a learning experience all her own" (Peterson, 1984, p. 52). This idea of birth as a rite of passage is also reflected in Meltzer's (1981) anthology of ancient birth songs, prayers and stories.

The experience of conscious, internal regulation of conception can be seen as an extension of this understanding of pregnancy and birth as a transformative process, involving the dynamics of developing consciousness. From this perspective it could be understood that experiences of pregnancy, birth and nurturing which are perceived as initiatory or transformative may be related to the sort of reproductive autonomy described by women practising psycho-biological birth control.

Another factor relevant to the experience of reproductive autonomy may be the idea of ruthlessness which is reflected in this comment on

woman's attitude to abortion;

it is man who has evolved principles about the sacredness of life (which he very imperfectly lives up to) and women have passionately adopted them as their own. But principles are abstract ideas which are not, I believe, inherent in feminine psychology. Woman's basic instincts not concerned with the idea of life as such, but with the fact of life. The ruthlessness of nature which discards unwanted life is deeply ingrained in her make-up. (de Castillejo, 1973, p. 94).

This "ruthlessness" can be understood as one component of the transformative function of the feminine principle. Culturally, we have become accustomed to educated, intelligent women "taking it like a man" (Woodman, 1985), and interpret competitiveness or the drive for success and achievement as feminine ruthlessness. Yet it may be that the feminine capacity for ruthlessness has a different flavour, and a different focus. In terms of procreation, we are familiar with the ruthlessness of the mother in protecting her young, yet there is also a ruthlessness in refusing a foetus a place in which to grow, or a ruthless determination in protecting an egg from fertilisation. This determination appears to be supported by modern techniques of contraception and abortion, yet it has also been suggested that "to a great many women contraceptives, though accepted intellectually, are still unaesthetic, and to a deep basic feminine morality they are wholly unacceptable" (de Castillejo, 1973, p. 151). It seems that de Castillejo was not suggesting that fertility control per se is unacceptable but that the use of contraceptives is "unaesthetic", implying that there is another way. Perhaps

the "deep basic feminine morality" is to be found in the increasing awareness of the "conscious feminine", and with it, the forgotten mysteries of women's ways which may well include birth control practices which offer true reproductive autonomy.

It seems that the psychological explanation of a phenomenon such as internal regulation of conception can, perhaps, be found through consideration of both the feminine and masculine principles as described above. While it is the transformative character of the feminine, as the expression of a dynamic element of the psyche, driving towards motion, transformation, and change that has offered me most understanding of the intra-psychic dynamics most directly involved in my own process, an understanding of the masculine principle also offers a way to understand the forces at work personally and culturally in my experience of this. This has been especially evident for me in exploring the philosophical considerations surrounding this area; the cultural assumption of the eternal a priori nature of spirit and the consequent degrading of matter and the genetic principle (described by Neumann as typical of the masculine principle) met me at every point in this investigation. Although I started the exploration with my own subjective experience of the mind-body connection inherent in the birth control practice, I nevertheless found myself caught inside transcendent! theories and reductionist methodologies as I worked to translate experience into the written word. It has, in fact, been suggested that the "literate self cannot but feel its own transcendence and timelessness relative to the fleeting world of corporeal

existence" (Abram, 1996, p. 112). In this sense, the very act of writing words to describe subjective experience can have the effect of removing the description from the experience, and locating me, the writer, in the Platonic world of Ideas. It has also been convincingly argued that "literacy has promoted the subjugation of women by men throughout all but the very recent history of the West. Misogyny and patriarchy rise and fall with the fortunes of the alphabetic written word" (Shlain, 1998).

One solution I can find to the apparent contradiction of exploring women's subjective experience of something as essentially feminine as reproductive practices via the written word, is to include an invitation to you, the reader, to pause to take a deep breath every two or three paragraphs, and to use this pause to take the time to notice the body sense, the embodied experience of what is being read, and the associations that are stirred by the written word, to pause for a moment to remember (recollect the dismembered body). In this way it may be possible to relocate attention from the realm of pure ideas to that of embodied experience.

It is, in fact, the emphasis on subjective experience in the current thesis which led to the following investigation of phenomenological psychology as a theoretical basis for exploring the experience of conscious internal regulation of fertility.

Phenomenological psychology

Phenomenological psychology is interested in subjective experience. As a philosophical tradition, phenomenology offers an alternative to the assumptions of a transcendental, objective reality. Edmund Husserl (1931; 1970; 1977) first formulated phenomenology in the early 1900s in response to the emphasis on the quantification of phenomena in psychology and the philosophical assumptions underlying this. As a "science of experience", phenomenology is based on the world as it is directly experienced. Ironically, Husserl began by describing the experiencing self as a "transcendental" mind, proposing that the reality of phenomena lies solely in the way that they are perceived. Transcendental phenomenology claims that all experiences, and thus all knowledge, depend on subjective interpretation. As part of this understanding, Husserl (1931) described the task of "phenomenological reduction", introspection about the relationships between the object of perception (constituted in the mind by the noema, or noematic functions of consciousness) and cognitive operations intending the object (which are the noesis, or noetic functions, of consciousness). In other words, both the object being studied and the internal processing involved in attending to the object are considered as products of mind.

While Husserl's initial emphasis on subjective reality as nonmaterial served to differentiate phenomenology from the objective sciences which focused on the material world, allowing a qualitative approach to experience, it perpetuated the neglect of the body. Nevertheless, Husserl entered the world

of subjective experience in detail, describing processes of perception and experience. One such process, "intentional analysis" involves an alternation between the object as object of study (the noematic processes that bring the object before the mind) and noetic cognitive processes as object of study, resulting in the conscious awareness of a previously unconscious process. David Bohm (1980) has used the term *relevance* for this lifting into attention of a content previously out of conscious awareness. It is this experience of relevance that may be central to understanding how a previously unconscious process becomes accessible to conscious awareness and response. Relevance in this sense is not a process of logical inference, but involves the faculty of mind to directly comprehend the principles upon which it operates. Husserl called this "eidetic intuition", and it has been likened to the exploration of archetypal symbols in Jungian psychology (Laughlin, McManus, & d'Aquili, 1990). Implicit in this process is the concept of epoche, "suspension of judgement", which involves observing, analysing, and describing experience by removing oneself from the "immediate and lived engagement" in it (Husserl, cited in Laughlin et al., 1990). This experience of observing internal processes is certainly familiar to my practice of internally regulating fertility. Is intentional analysis one ingredient of this?

This concept of objective, mindful inner observation can also be found in other traditions. The ancient Hindu spiritual treatise, the Bhagavad Gita (J. Mascaro, trans. 1962), revolved around the concept of the "Eternal Witness", that which knows the knower. The philosopher, G.I. Gurdjieff (1973), whose

work was largely based on the esoteric Islam tradition of Sufism from the eleventh to fifteenth centuries, described "self-observation" as one way to "break through the vicious circle of (his) automatism" (cited in Bennett, 1973, p. 227). There are, therefore, many references to the idea of accessing previously automatic, unconscious processes, and the bringing of both the contents and the process into conscious awareness.

There are also clinical reports (Wolinsky, 1991) that observation of specific response states (understanding the dynamics of a phobic response, for example) can produce change in the response. This is consistent with the understanding of feedback, an idea emerging from cybernetics, the scientific study of control processes in different systems. Pert (1997) has used the metaphor of a helmsman who steers a ship by constantly adjusting the tiller in response to information, or feedback, from sensory information, as an example of a feedback loop. This understanding has been applied in biofeedback, a system of treatment in which patients are trained to modify their own autonomic body processes, especially cardiovascular and respiratory functions.

A psychological explanation of feedback involves the concept of identification, the unconscious assumption that the experience of a response or a set of responses is the same as the experience of self. When a person is thus identified with a response pattern, it is experienced as automatic and unchangeable. When a person is taught to observe the intra-psychic

ABSTRACT  
LIBRARY  
H.S. YOUNG

dynamics, or discrete response states, to bring these into conscious awareness, the identification is no longer total. Instead of "this is me", it becomes, "these sensations, thoughts, feelings, experiences are part of my experience". This clinically based description of disidentification through observation is remarkably similar to Husserl's description of phenomenological reduction, and supports the premise that how people organise their perceptions of reality contributes to their experience of themselves and the world.

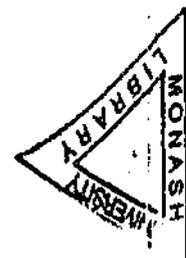
Consistent with this theoretical perspective, conscious internal fertility management could be explained in terms of identification with (or disidentification from) certain internal responses. If this is the case, what allows some women to disidentify from the cultural consensus reality about fertility management and to identify with an alternative approach, or to disidentify from previously automatic biological processes and to identify with the capacity to control them? Does the process involve an internal state of observation rather than identification? If the sort of revelation described by Bohm (1980) is an essential component of the experience, then it would seem likely that there is some disidentification involved as it is through the objective attending that previously unconscious contents become conscious.

While Husserl's transcendental phenomenology leads to an exploration of the intra-psychic dynamics of experience such as developing conscious awareness of previously unconscious processes, his later work addressed the



importance of the body in the intersubjective world of life, the "life-world", the world of lived experience, prior to any thoughts or intra-psychic processing. In fact, Husserl has described how any attempt to represent the world always involves losing its direct presence, offering a warning to Western science. Once again, the issues of transcendence vs embodied experience appear central. Husserl's phenomenology raises the question of whether it is even possible to consider a "*psycho-biological*" process without assuming an embodied experience.

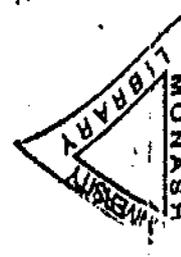
It is, however, the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962; 1964; 1968) that placed the life of the body itself at the core of experience. In further developing Husserl's phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty eloquently and emphatically rejected the assumption of a disembodied, transcendental centre of awareness, locating the body as the true subject of experience, the "body subject". While this seems to contradict Husserl's idea of intentional analysis, I understand Merleau-Ponty to have been advocating a sort of witnessing within the participation in lived experience, rather than an observing from outside. This living within experience allows for an ongoing interaction between the perceiver and the perceived, so that it is not mind doing something to matter but rather a mutual process of attraction, attention, and experience. This animation of matter is a difficult concept for psychology which has attempted to objectify experience in order to claim a place in the scientific world. I would extend Merleau-Ponty's depiction of an active, animate, alive world around me to an experience of this within also. A woman's womb "calling to be filled" (or



not) is very similar to Merleau-Ponty's (1962) description of the air breathing him; "I am breathing deeply and slowly in order to summon sleep, and suddenly it is as if my mouth were connected to some lung outside myself which alternately calls forth and forces back my breath" (p. 212). By suggesting that *participation* is the defining attribute of perception itself, this approach lends itself to an understanding of psycho-biological processes as a continuous interchange, a reciprocity of the body/mind field. Phenomenology can, therefore, offer a basis for describing mind-body processes as one part of "me" reciprocally interacting with another part of "me", rather than as a disembodied "me" (mind) acting on body.

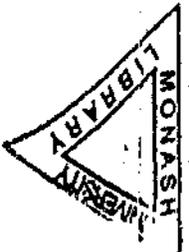
#### Abraham Maslow and self-actualisation

The idea of reciprocity is also consistent with Abraham Maslow's (1954) description of personality as an active agent which enters into a *complex mutual relationship* with stimuli impinging upon it. In this sense, Maslow's views exemplify those of phenomenological psychology which would propose that a response needs to be studied as one expression of a whole organism, and must be understood within the context of the interrelationships within the organism and with other responses. Such a study would be expected to reveal a collection of factors related to a behaviour or a response, and how these interact within the person and between the person and the world. This is also consistent with the psychoanalytic approach of Horney (1967) who described the continual flux of dynamic interaction whereby any one part is always affecting every other part in some way, and, in turn, simultaneously, being



affected by all other parts. Obviously, these principles do not simplify research into human response and behaviours, yet they do make it clear that these cannot be understood outside the context of the human being under study. Maslow (1954), in fact, postulated the paradoxical conclusion that "the fundamental datum of psychology is the original complexity that psychologists had set themselves to analyse into elements or fundamental units" (p. 22).

In line with the principles of phenomenological psychology, Maslow (1954) undertook an investigation of self-actualisation, "the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities, potentialities, etc." (p. 200), which he himself acknowledged does not involve "conventionally reliable data" (p. 199). His characteristics of self-actualising people were built up "as in the slow development of a global or holistic impression of the sort that we form of our friends and acquaintances" (p. 203). While these composite impressions have been criticised for lacking objective, quantitative measures, they nevertheless offer some intriguing categories for further study. In relation to the present study there are two characteristics which are of interest: "autonomy" and "resistance to enculturation". Autonomy is described as a relative independence from the physical and social environment, with a reliance on one's own latent resources, while resistance to enculturation involves a "certain inner detachment from the culture in which they are immersed" (p. 224), and suggests adherence to one's own rules rather than the rules of society.



Maslow's work raises important questions for the current investigation. What is the subjective experience of people who demonstrate non-harmful responses or behaviours which appear to be independent of cultural and environmental conditioning? Is there something which characterises the way these people organise or experience their perception of reality? What allows or motivates someone to respond or behave in a way that differs from the prevailing cultural perception of reality? The women describing mind-body regulation of fertility would seem to demonstrate the characteristics of autonomy and resistance to enculturation, at least in this specific area. It has become obvious to me that these are elements of my experience of internal regulation of fertility. Do other women describe themselves this way? Is this part of their perception of reality?

Phenomenological theory does, then, offer much to the present investigation of women's subjective experience of a psycho-biological process. It also suggests approaches to data collection, analysis, and interpretation, which are explored in Chapter 6. From this perspective, reductive efforts do not offer much to psychological research where reducing the apparently complex to the apparently simple is likely to lose the context and meaning of human responses. This is especially true when the focus of study, as in the present paper, is the subjective experience of a behaviour which has no known, observable correlates except the outcome which could, arguably, be interpreted from a number of different perspectives. It has, in fact, been suggested that the "essential features" of the phenomenological method are a



"protest against the reductionism of positivism" (Spiegelberg, 1960, pp. 7-20), rather than any one particular theoretical position.

The psychological theories considered in this chapter raise some important questions and suggests some possible explanations for the phenomenon of internal regulation of fertility. As the archetype underlying the female functions of reproduction, the feminine principle has been described as both elementary and transformative in character, suggesting possible intra-psychic dynamics in the experience of psycho-biological birth control. Phenomenological theory offers further understandings of these dynamics. Perhaps more importantly, these perspectives both engage the mystery and integrity of subjective human experience, offering some possible explanations and raising important questions about what might be happening and how it might be happening, while also allowing for the uniqueness of each person's responses.



## CHAPTER THREE

Cycles of meaning: Mythology and anthropologyMythology

Mythology offers an historical and cultural perspective which can otherwise be missing from contemporary research. It is easy to forget that this current era is also a time in which particular myths pervade, as the contemporary myths tend to be called "reality" or "truth". This is especially relevant to the exploration of reproductive autonomy, as one contemporary "truth" is to be found in medical science which has taught the "reality" of biological reproduction and has offered methods consistent with this to prevent conception. I would argue that this is not reproductive autonomy but a kind of reproductive dependence which a study of mythology places in a disturbing and provocative perspective.

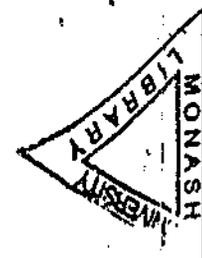
Alan Watts (1968) has described myth as "a complex of stories - some no doubt fact, and some fantasy - which, for various reasons, human beings regard as demonstrations of the inner meaning of the universe and human life"



(pp. 7- 8). To recognise that any view of reality is the product of a mythology, or a collection of mythologies, makes it possible to move beyond some of the unconscious assumptions which determine human lives. A study of mythology can, then, demonstrate the impact of cultural conditioning on prevailing beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. In this context, much of the current education and practice of birth control can be understood to reflect contemporary myths rather than women's authentic subjective experience of their bodies, desires, and deepest understandings.

Myths also describe the various and sometimes dramatic breakthrough of the sacred (or the "supernatural") into the world; "it is this sudden breakthrough of the sacred that really establishes the world and makes it what it is today" (Eliade, 1963, p. 6). To quote extensively from cultural historian, William Irwin Thompson (1981),

take a photograph of a reflection in a mirror and think of that piece of film, which will in turn reflect an image to the curving surfaces of the eye and the folding surfaces of the brain. Study the events of history as Thucydides did, and the work itself becomes an event of history. Study mythology, and the work itself becomes a piece of mythology, a story in which old gods wear new clothes but live as they did before the fashions became tight and constricting to their ancient, natural movements. The scientist tries to examine the "real" nature of the photograph; he tries to get away from the psychological configuration, the meaning of the image, to move down to some other, more basic level of patterns of alternating dots of light and dark, a world of elementary particles. And yet what does he find there but another mental configuration, another arrangement of psychological meaning? If he persists in this direction long enough, the mythological dimensions of



science will become apparent in his work, as they would have if he had asked himself questions about the meaning of sunlight rather than questions about the behaviour of photons. Science wrought to its uttermost becomes myth. History wrought to its uttermost becomes myth. But what is myth that it returns to mind even when we would most escape it? (p. 3).

Thompson has offered an exemplary answer to his own question in the form of a book exploring mythology, sexuality and the origins of culture, proposing that "history becomes the performance of myth" and the experience of recalling "enlightens the individual to see that myth is the history of the soul" (Thompson, 1981, p. 6). Mythology as the "history of the soul" brings present archetypes and principles which have much to offer in describing the functions of the feminine principle in creation and procreation.

It is now well established that goddesses rather than male deities occupied the focal point of Neolithic European religion (ca. 6500 BC to ca. 3500 BC). Archaeologist, Marija Gimbutas (1982), reported that twenty times more female than male figurines have so far been excavated from European Neolithic sites, and suggested that the term "Palaeolithic Venus", by which the earliest, small ancient figurines were first characterised by scholars, is an ironic misnomer. These early figures date from ca. 33,000 BC to ca. 9,000 BC, and, like subsequent engravings, reliefs and sculptures, frequently de-emphasise facial features, while apparently unrealistically exaggerating gender characteristics such as breasts, buttocks, hips, and vulva. In contrast to other explanations, Gimbutas (1991) has claimed that the continuity of

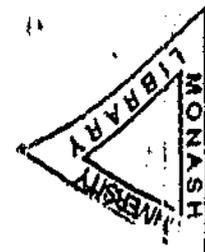


portrayal of these features of the female human body is a potent argument for the continuity of a philosophical idea; that the images are symbolic or mythical figures, probably used to commemorate seasonal or other rites dedicated to the various aspects of the "Goddess Creatix" (Gimbutas, 1991, p. 27).

These recent discoveries in archaeology suggest that the era of supreme feminine deities in religion can be documented throughout twenty-five thousand years, an understanding first proposed by J.J. Bachofen (Trans, 1967) in his study of "myth, religion, and mother right" last century. Among the earliest representations of the human female principle are engravings and drawings of vulvas from the Aurignacian period (ca. 33,000 BC). The artist appears to have been making a symbol, "not of human birth alone but of all birth in nature" (Gimbutas, 1991, p. 30). This leads to the understanding that

woman per se was probably believed to have potent, even "magical" powers of fertility, and her birth-giving powers on a personal scale mirrored the feminine principle of birth and regeneration on a cosmic scale. The goddess embodying the female principle had power over the earth and upon the human body (Dexter, 1990, p. 5).

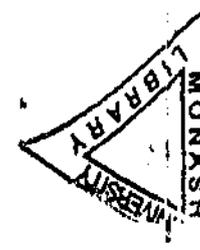
Although the female principle was venerated for its fertile, life-giving properties, there are also many example of goddesses who embodied the entire life process: birth, life, and death. There are myths which retain the ancient features of these figures at their core, containing some characteristics of the prehistoric "Goddess of Life, Death, and Regeneration". Samuel Noah Kramer (Wolkstein & Kramer, 1983) is a cuneiformist who has devoted his entire scholarly career to the restoration and translation of the written tales,



legends, and songs of the ancient Sumerians, a vast body of literature inscribed on clay tablets and fragments dating back to 2000 BC. Folklorist, Diane Wolkstein collaborated with Kramer to produce a publication of the story of "goddess who outweighed, overshadowed, and outlasted them all ..... Inanna, 'Queen of Heaven'." (Kramer, 1979). The myth of "Inanna's Descent to the Underworld" originated in ancient Mesopotamia, 3500 BC, or before. In the myth, Inanna, who rules over the upper world, decides to visit Ereshkigal, queen of the underworld.

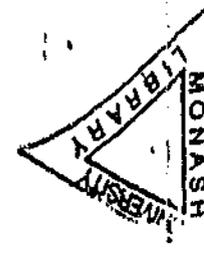
At the time of this myth, the increasingly male dominated Sumerian culture was separating from earlier matrilineal forms. Before the descent myth, another story tells how Inanna, in order to rule, had to take power from the God, Enki, assuming his symbols of sovereignty as her own. Ereshkigal represents the archaic feminine, the dark mysteries of the older religion which has been sent underground. The descent story can, therefore, be understood as Inanna balancing her heroic victories in the upper (masculine) world by reconnecting with the rhythms and cycles of the under (feminine) world. Based on her clinical experience as an analyst, Meador (1992) called this a "pattern of a woman's passage from cultural adaptation to an encounter with her essential nature" (p. 43), an interesting echo of Maslow's description of the characteristics of autonomy and resistance to enculturation discussed in Chapter 2.

The archaic, instinctual feminine, represented by Ereshkigal in the



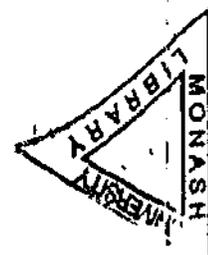
Sumerian myth, appears in many forms in mythology across cultures and time. In the form of the Hindu goddess, Devi or Kali, this feminine principle has two faces: destruction and regeneration. In the form of the Medusa she is the Destroyer aspect of the Triple Goddess called Neith in Egypt, Ath-enna or Athene in North Africa (Walker, 1983). It is through the Medusa that mythology offers a hint of what may once have been possible for women in terms of birth control. Medusa's inscription at Sais called her "mother of all the gods, whom she bore before childbirth existed" (Larousse, 1968, p. 37). The hidden, dangerous face of the Medusa is said to have represented Death, which no mortal can see without being turned to stone (as in death). Another interpretation is that Medusa was veiled because she was the Future, which is hidden from human view. Yet another meaning of her dangerous face was the menstrual taboo (Walker, 1983). An early work by Frazer (1922) stated that pre-industrial people often believed that the look of a menstrual woman could turn a man to stone.

The Medusa was, therefore, understood to have magic blood that could create and destroy life (Walker, 1983), and which represented the dreaded life and death giving "moon-blood" of women. A female face surrounded by serpent-hair (the image of the Medusa) was an ancient, widely recognised symbol of divine feminine wisdom, and equally of the "wise blood" that supposedly gave women their powers. If the power of this "wise blood" is explored, it becomes obvious that menstrual blood represented the mysterious magic of creation from the earliest of human cultures. It has been suggested



that "men regarded this blood with holy dread, as the life-essence, inexplicably shed without pain, wholly foreign to male experience" (Walker, 1983, p. 635). Even the words for menstruation meant things like incomprehensible, supernatural, and sacred. At the time when all gods were seen to recognise the supremacy of the archetypal Great Mother, who manifested as the spirit of creation, her menstrual blood was central to their power (Lederer, 1968). These are potent descriptions of a time (mythological and/or historical) when "God was a woman" (Stone, 1978), when the prevailing myths told "truths" of feminine power and mysteries, and when the secrets of fertility resided totally with women.

While the actual process of conception as Western science knows it was often poorly understood, it is recorded that menstrual blood was associated with creation in many cultures. The Maoris stated explicitly that human souls are made of menstrual blood which, when retained in the womb, "assumes human form and grows into a man" (Briffault, 1977, p. 635). Africans believed that menstrual blood "congealed to fashion a man" (Frazer, 1922, p. 243). The prenatal function of menstrual blood as either forming the human baby, or at least nourishing it, was also prevalent well into the 18th century in Western medicine (Needham, 1934), and this idea was not fully relinquished until 1930 (Davis, 1974)! With this inevitable association between menstrual blood and conception, it is not surprising that pre-industrial people realised that menstruation indicated the absence of conception. Whether or not a baby was made seemed totally dependent on the functions of the

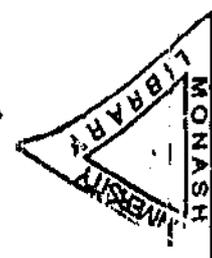


woman's body, which were strongly associated with the cycles of the moon and with feminine deities. Briffault (1977) wrote that

the idea that menstruation is *caused* by the new moon is universal. Papuans say that a girl's first menstruation is due to the moon having had connection with her during sleep, and the Maoris speak of menstruation as "moon sickness". A Maori stated: "the moon is the permanent husband, or true husband, of all women, because women menstruate when the moon appears. According to the knowledge of our ancestors and elders, the marriage of a man and wife is a matter of no moment; the moon is the real husband". We shall see that such conceptions are by no means peculiar to the Maori, but pervade primitive thought (p. 252).

I surmise, from reading between the lines of these stories, that the power of creation was once understood to have rested directly with women, or between women and the gods/goddesses. It seems likely that pre-industrial woman also made this association, thereby assuming full responsibility for conception.

One of the elements of my own experience was the decision to assume full responsibility for birth control, leaving no part of this with the male partner or with any other external agency. Once again, this is not a popular position in the era of feminist principles and yet, ironically, it seems to approximate the understanding of ancient cultures where "God was a woman". This understanding is also suggested in the poetry of the twelfth-century Taoist adept, Zhou Xuanjing (Cleary, 1996), which was first brought to my attention through the work of Jeanne Elizabeth Blum (1996), who has suggested that Zhou Xuanjing's poetry referred "to life, the feminine, to energy, and gestation"

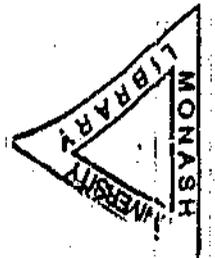


(p. 141). Specifically, one particular poem can be understood to be describing the process of internal regulation of fertility. While it is the last verse which is of special interest, the whole poem offers clues to this understanding;

The secret of the receptive  
 Must be sought in stillness;  
 Within stillness there remains  
 The potential for action.  
 If you force empty sitting,  
 Holding dead images in mind,  
 The tiger runs, the dragon flies -  
 How can the elixir be given?

The pedestal of awareness  
 Is steady as a boulder -  
 Let others flourish or fall,  
 In a thousand different states.  
 The yang light originally  
 Is the wish-fulfilling jewel;  
 Here you take it in  
 To crystallise the great restorative.

My mind is like the autumn  
 In the heartland of Chan;  
 I earnestly sit in mental work  
 From midnight and noon.  
 Fish and dragons are lively;  
 While the waves are still -  
 There is just the moonlight remaining  
 In the eternal sky.



Light smoke and thin mist  
 Block the empty sky,  
 Leaving the spiritual brightness  
 No place to abide.  
 Hate and love, prosperity and decline,  
 All are sharp swords;  
 I am like a despoiled virgin -  
 How can you look for me?

Essence and life must first be studied  
 In the moon cave;  
 Capture the dragon, bind the tiger,  
 Do not delay.  
 If yang leaks out during its development,  
 How can the granule be preserved whole?  
 (Cleary, 1996, pp. 70-73).

Blum (1996) has explained that "Moon Cave" is a colloquial expression for the womb or vagina, and that "The Dragon" is associated with fertility and "in essence to 'capture the Dragon' would be to control fertility" (p. 144). Similarly, to "bind the tiger" can be understood to refer to arresting and dispersing energy at acupuncture points associated with contraception or therapeutic abortion. Blum has explained that the poet was one of a group of women known as the "Immortal Sisters", all of whom were Taoist Masters of whom "it is said that they could move energy throughout their bodies by just thinking about it, focusing the mind, seeing the energy move, in out up down, and it was so" (p. 144). These women apparently assumed full responsibility for regulating the bodily processes of reproduction, apparently practising true reproductive autonomy.



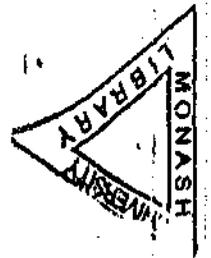
There are, however, strong religious, political, and cultural forces which, throughout history, have worked against women assuming reproductive autonomy. While a search of texts on mythology and ancient religions, reveals much emphasis on fertility, there is scant reference to birth control. Were ancient women as helpless to control conception as modern woman would be without medical science and technology? I think not, although the dearth of references to birth control suggests that they did not have knowledge in this area. This lack of information can, however, be understood in different ways. It may, in fact, be that there simply was no information to record, or it may be that such information was truly part of women's mysteries, an inner knowing, or a secret teaching, that was seldom recorded. In oral traditions which predominated in many parts of Europe and Asia well into this century, "women's business" was conducted in secret with no written records. In her book, *Sex and destiny: The politics of human fertility*, Germaine Greer (1985, p. 130) opened the chapter on contraception with the following citation;

(We) would gladly accept (family planning) provided it:

- not interfere with our working;
- not do us permanent harm;
- not be against our religion;
- be free or nearly so;
- have a woman to examine us and to teach us what to do and how to do it
- *remain a secret between her and us.*

Women's Meeting, Central Javan Village, 1977 (emphasis mine).

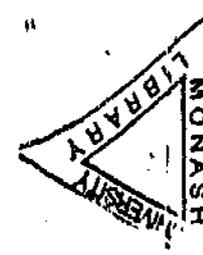
Neumann (1991) has said that the primordial female mysteries "were



traditionalised into cults, which, as we know, were *kept secret by the women*" (p. 291, emphasis mine). He also suggested that these mysteries extended from the original secrets of feminine initiation into rules governing sexual intercourse and methods of preventing conception. As well being kept secret, it may also be that much of the information about early birth control practices has been lost. The remarkable efficiency of early Christians in destroying ancient written texts and images has been well documented (Sjoo & Mor, 1987; Shlain, 1998; Stone, 1978; Thompson, 1981), and knowledge preserved via an oral tradition is particularly vulnerable to religious and political purges. Jeanne Achterberg (1990) has vividly demonstrated this in her historical account of the role of women in the Western healing tradition.

#### The masculine principle and the power of creation

Male jealousy of women's powers has a long history. An ancient Chinese myth said that the Moon-goddess, Chang-O, who controlled menstruation, was offended by male jealousy of her powers. She left her husband, who quarrelled with her because she had all the elixir of immortality, the menstrual blood, and he had none (Larousse, 1968). The superstitious horror of menstrual blood which pervaded the teachings of Persian and Jewish patriarchs may well have had its origin in such jealousy. Many taboos forbade men to touch a menstrual woman, or to wash in water in which she had bathed (Briffault, 1977). From the mythological references, it seems likely that menstrual blood represented woman's access to mysteries and to power unavailable to males. Later Judeo-Christian teachings were apparently

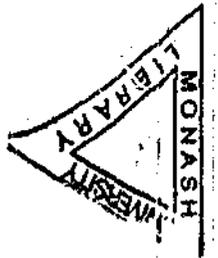


influenced by these superstitions and taboos, commanding women to despise the "uncleanness" of their own bodies, and insisting that the power of creating life rested with God and the Church, and not with women. Walker (1983) elaborated Lederer's (1968) suggestion that the Church interpreted the fable of Genesis as God's mandate to compel women to bear as many children as possible. The transition from matrifocal to patriarchal societies obviously involved a shift of power from feminine principles to masculine, and it seems that there was a determined attempt to wrest back the power of creation from the feminine. The polarity between creation and procreation may well have had its beginnings in Judeo-Christian scripture in the book of Genesis, where, "by God's command, the free and open sexuality of the fertility goddess was to be forbidden to fallen woman" (Lerner, 1986, p. 196). This curse upon woman for Eve's enticement of Adam into evil specifically addressed procreation,

I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you. (Genesis 4.16)

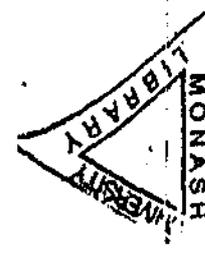
Thompson (1981) has argued that

this effort to displace the female seems to be the archetypal foundation for civilisation, for mankind has been at it ever since; whether he is challenging mother nature in flying away from her in rockets, or in challenging her on earth through genetic engineering, man has not given up the attempt to take away the mystery of life from the Great Mother and the conservative feminine religion (p. 163).



He cited the ancient Sumerian myth which tells of the struggle between Enki, the god of water, and Ninhursag, the goddess of earth. This story, which, like the myth of Inanna, has been translated from inscriptions on stone tablets (Jacobsen, 1976; Wolkstein & Kramer, 1983), dates back to around 2500 BC, and tells of the conflict of the sexes in the transition from the Neolithic matrilineal order to the patriarchal. Enki, a powerful god who can flow over boundaries, inseminating his daughters and the daughters of his daughters, seduces Ninhursag's daughter. Ninhursag takes his semen from her daughter's body and eight plants grow from this. Enki finds the plants, eats them, and finds himself pregnant with eight beings gestating in different parts of his body. He soon becomes ill as he is not made to be pregnant. Ninhursag helps Enki by placing him in her vagina, where he is able to give birth to the eight goddesses. This myth describes Enki's power but also what happens to this when he tries to take over the life-giving power of the feminine. Enki is brought back to the ancient symbol of feminine mysteries, the vulva.

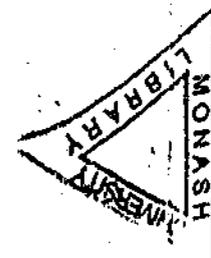
A more recent attempt to displace the feminine (or anyone at all who defied the edict of the Church) occurred with the Inquisition, the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical tribunals for suppression of heresy, which began in the Middle Ages and lasted for 600 years. Women, or men, who defied the edicts of the Church, sometimes in apparently trivial ways, were labelled "witches" or "heretics", and murdered. The witchcraft or heresy trials were horrifying in their obvious injustice and brutality, and the number of victims during the "burning days" (Starhawk, 1989) is estimated between 100,000 and 9 million (Shuttle &



Redgrove, 1989); while the exact numbers are unknown, it seems that the lower estimate is certainly an underestimation. Anyone who had an unusual ability, or who was vocal in criticism of the church or of patriarchal values and laws, risked torture and death. The persecution of "witches" illustrates the determination to destroy or force submission from anyone who threatened patriarchal values.

Many churchmen believed that "witches" inherited secret knowledge of birth control practices. It seems likely that this belief contributed to the vigour of the persecutions, once again suggesting that control of conception and fertility posed a threat. The *Malleus Maleficarum*, the definitive text published by the Catholic Church in the fifteenth century to identify witches, stated that "witches can obstruct the generative powers (copulation) so that intercourse is not possible and babies not conceived" (Kramer & Sprenger, trans. 1928, pp. 54-55), and that "sometimes the woman is caused to be unable to conceive" (p. 56) by the actions of a "witch"; "the use of contraceptives such as potions or herbs that contravene nature ..... are to be punished as homicides" (p. 56). In conclusion, it is stated that "it is witchcraft, not only when anyone is not able to perform the carnal act ..... but also when a woman is prevented from conceiving" (p. 66).

The Roman Catholic doctrine against all forms of birth control is based on the views of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), a theologian who claimed that contraception was "against nature and morally wrong" (Grimwade, Fraser, &



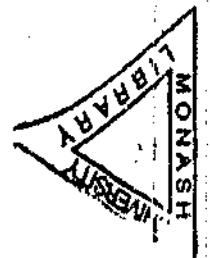
Farrell, 1995). This attitude was also central to the "subversive negativism" of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, in the late fourteenth century; Augustine's dogma, which is built into current social metaphors and fundamental attitudes, presented a view of women "not so much as the creators but simply as the custodians of the progeny they carry within their bodies" (Highwater, 1990, p. 126). It seems that the same scripture which banned the "free and open sexuality" of the goddess to "fallen woman" also forbade access to teachings and mysteries associated with reproductive autonomy. There now remains little of the mythological power in what Mircea Eliade (1958) called "the activity of motherhood, of an inexhaustible power of creation" (pp. 261-2).

It seems that the power of creation was taken by the Church as its own, and any ability to control conception represented a threat to patriarchal or church control. It has been suggested by a contemporary medical writer that "the fanaticism of the church, and the diligence of opportunist fellow-travellers managed to bury much of what was known about fertility control techniques" (Davis, 1974, p. viii). Davis has proposed that the Inquisition concentrated much of its efforts on attempts to totally eradicate the theory and practice of fertility regulation. He noted as ironical that during the 1960's, medicine rediscovered techniques, and began to adopt attitudes, well understood and accepted more than 2,500 years ago. In another publication on the history of contraception, Riddle (1992) also emphasised that there has been conspicuous discontinuity of knowledge in this regard, while many rediscoveries have yet to be made.



Davis (1974) has also offered some observations of a difference in male and female approaches to contraception on an ideological level, making a distinction between "prevention of pregnancy" and "induction of menstruation" (p. 56). It seems that, historically, women have linked prevention of conception with menstrual regulation, while it is of relatively recent origin and masculine derivation to regard prevention of pregnancy as something involving repeated precautionary steps taken before intercourse to prevent something that may or may not occur. These different approaches are important in understanding an idea such as psycho-biological regulation of conception which may operate as a "fertility regulating practice" rather than a preventative contraceptive measure. In this sense, it is more in line with ancient fertility control practices used by women for centuries before the contemporary contraceptive techniques devised by science.

There is, then, some evidence that prior to the time of patriarchal dominance, knowledge of birth control was available to European women, mainly in the form of post-conceptive fertility control (Davis, 1974). The contention of the present thesis is that historical and mythological information points to the possibility that women could once have had knowledge about controlling fertility through an inner relationship with the rhythms and cycles of their bodies. It is also proposed that a relationship with the transpersonal forms associated with feminine mysteries may have formed a part of this, and that this knowledge was lost during the determined efforts of the Church and State to establish patriarchal values as dominant. While not established

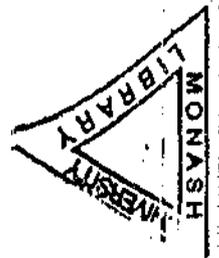


conclusively, these considerations do provide a cultural and historical context for making sense of contemporary approaches to birth control and offer a collective context for women's subjective experience of fertility management.

### Anthropology

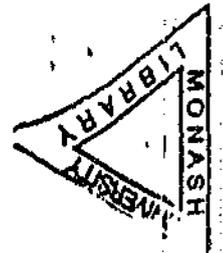
The impact of enculturation once again arises in anthropological research which has suggested that people are bound by and to whatever belief systems contribute to the consensus reality. An examination of pre-industrial, traditional beliefs regarding conception, does, in fact, provide evidence for psycho-biological regulation of fertility. Anthropology, however, offers far more to the current study than ethnographic data. Since its beginnings as a materialist science, anthropology has developed a concern with issues such as mentation, cognition, consciousness, and symbolism. It is well understood that the prevailing cosmology of a culture "tends to define the universe of known realities within both space and time" (Eliade, 1954).

Laughlin et al. (1990) used the phrase "cycle of meaning" to describe the process of integration of knowledge and experience which results in a cosmology. the "culturally conditioned, cognised view of reality as a systemic, multicameral, dynamic, and organic whole" (p. 214). They have suggested that "strenuous effort is required of a Western scientist to realise that his concrete view of reality is merely a construct ..... and thus an impediment placed in the way of comprehending a unitary cosmos in which his cognised environment is



only one of many alternative views" (p. 226). Not only the Western scientist, but any outside observer, does have a difficult task; it has been observed that all viable cosmological systems work to guide members from belief, through understanding, to some degree of realisation through lived experience, thus completing the "cycle of meaning". Hence belief systems or cosmologies only make true sense within the context in which they arise, are learned and lived.

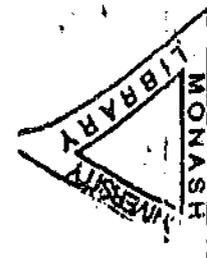
Laughlin et al. (1990) described these three stages of the developing relationship with a cosmology: belief, understanding, and realisation. At the level of "belief", most of what is known comes from others rather than through direct experience; "understanding" is the stage when learning begins to make sense in relation to direct experience, while the stage of "realisation" involves full participation in the cosmos of the group. Most pre-industrial, traditional societies did not leave this process to chance, using ritual practices, elaborate preparation, and traditional interpretation of experience to verify the cosmologies. It has also been noted that the cycle of meaning is vulnerable to change, with both positive and negative effects. Just as new information or experiences can be blended with the traditional to enrich a cosmology, a break in the cycle can diminish the meaning of a cosmology, rendering it "developmentally inert" in a single generation. I find this understanding of the relative fragility of cultural systems of meaning sobering in terms of the current rate of change and disintegration of systems of meaning, and yet also affirming of my contention that very different practices of birth control could have existed as common practice before major cultural transitions such as the



Inquisition or the Industrial Revolution.

### Anthropology and women

It is very probable that some form of psycho-biological regulation of conception by women has been part of the cycle of meaning for certain groups. Ethnographic data can help illustrate this, although the use of this data is apparently a vexed issue amongst anthropologists, who have warned that anthropological research is contaminated by a "constellation of images, metaphors, and meanings about women and their sexuality set against the contrast between civilisation and the primitive" (Tiffany & Adams, 1985, p. 1). These critics have suggested that contrasts inherent in Western thinking, such as civilised and primitive, white and black, developed and undeveloped, influence our understanding of human experience and behaviour, both past and present. For example, Bronislaw Malinowski's (1929) pioneering work in participant-observation of the Trobriand Islanders in the early 1900's has been criticised as masculine conceptual thinking by historians and anthropologists alike; Tiffany and Adams (1985) accused Malinowski of making women "invisible". Yet, it is important to recognise that the orientation expressed in these criticisms can be as influential in determining perceptions as were Malinowski's personal conflicts and processes (as revealed in his diary, published posthumously in 1967). Malinowski himself was acutely aware of the problem of overlaying interpretations based on a foreign belief structure onto the cultures within which he worked. He also offered a warning about interpretation and generalisation of findings of sociological studies;



any belief or item of folklore is not a simple piece of information to be picked up from any haphazard source, from any chance informant, and to be laid down as an axiom to be drawn with one single contour. On the contrary, every belief is reflected in the minds of a given society, and it is expressed in many social phenomena. It is, therefore, complex, and, in fact, if it is present in the social reality in overwhelming variety, very often puzzling, chaotic, and elusive. In other words, there is a "social dimension" to a belief, and this must be carefully studied (Malinowski, 1974, p. 241).

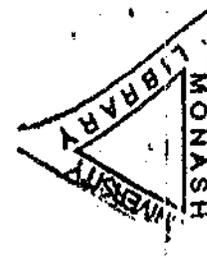
It is interesting that, in relation to the phenomenon of birth control, Malinowski rendered women as anything but invisible. In the context of the present paper, one of the most important findings of Malinowski's work in the Trobriand Islands is his contention that the Islanders did not make any connection between sexual intercourse and pregnancy, with pregnancy only occurring when a woman "invited the spirit of a child to enter her body". While the Trobrianders had strong taboos against pregnancy in unmarried girls, there were apparently no taboos against premarital sexual intercourse, and cohabitation and frequent sexual relations between unmarried people were common. Pregnancy rarely occurred in such relationships, although Malinowski could discover no forms of mechanical contraception, and abstinence or withdrawal were apparently not practised. The Trobrianders simply believed that girls who did not invite the spirit of the child into their bodies would not conceive. The same girls, once married, had no difficulty conceiving.



It is clear from Malinowski's (1974) extensive investigation of this issue, that any view of paternal kinship, as a relationship between father and child, was found to be foreign to the Trobriand mind at that time. The generic term for kinship was "veiola", meaning kinship in the maternal line, and this did not embrace the congenital relationship between a father and his children. Thus, while conception was preferred within marriage, there was apparently no direct connection made between sexual intercourse and conception. Malinowski even cited an example of a young man who was convinced of the sexual faithfulness of his "betrothed", but chose to marry someone else when his intended wife conceived a child at an "improper time" (and in his absence!) (p. 223). After extensive research, Malinowski summarised the Islander's view of conception;

a woman who is a virgin (nakapatu; na, female prefix; kapatu, closed, shut up) cannot give birth to a child, nor can she conceive, because nothing can enter or come out of her vulva. She must be opened up, or pierced through ..... Thus the vagina of a woman who has much intercourse will be more open and easier for a spirit child to enter. One that keeps fairly virtuous will have much poorer chances of becoming pregnant. But copulation is quite unnecessary except for its mechanical action (p. 229).

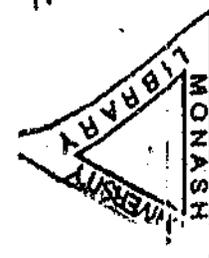
The implications of Malinowski's work for the present paper arise from the relatively low incidence of conception amongst unmarried, but sexually active, girls. The above descriptions of the Islander's belief systems in this area suggest that there is no rational, scientifically valid explanation of why these girls did not conceive at the normal rate of married women, other than



their explanation that they had not "invited the spirit of a child to enter". Thus, it seems that their belief system influenced their biological functions, suggesting, in fact, a mechanism of psycho-biological regulation of conception.

Investigating a similar phenomenon, Rosenblum (1976) cited the studies of Troeller and Deffarge, who spent time with the Muria people of India. In this culture, young people from five to seventeen lived separately from their parents in a "ghotul" dormitory. Within the ghotul, only 4 percent of girls became pregnant before marriage, despite regular sexual relations. Upon entering the ghotul, each girl took part in a ceremony in which the god of the ghotul was requested to keep her from becoming pregnant before marriage. More recently, a researcher in Africa described a local practice in which a woman would jump one way across a bush in order to conceive and the other way in order not to conceive (Private correspondence, 1993; Dr. Vincent Priya, Malawi, Africa). It does seem that whatever the cosmology, it is possible for women to devise ways to manage fertility that truly offer reproductive autonomy.

Currently, anthropologists seem critical of the suggestion that some pre-industrial, traditional groups of people were ignorant of the connection between sexual intercourse and pregnancy. However, Malinowski's (1974) scientific and philosophical rigour in investigating this issue is obvious from his descriptions of the methods of observation and questioning he used to gather information. While the connection between sexual intercourse and pregnancy



seems obvious once it becomes part of the consensus belief, as in a society which values scientific knowledge and education, Malinowski invites the reader to consider

the absolutely unsurmountable difficulties which a native "natural philosopher" would have to overcome if he had to arrive at anything approaching our embryological knowledge. If one realises how complex this knowledge is, and how lately we have arrived at it, it would seem preposterous to suppose even the slightest glimmer of it among the natives (p. 235).

This apparent ignorance about the causal relationship between sexual intercourse and pregnancy was also observed by Spencer and Gillen (1904) among the "most advanced" traditional groups of New Guinea (Malinowski, 1974, p. 232), and among the Arunta in Central Australia. A contemporary work has stated that

to the Aboriginal mind, the modern explanation of conception as the collision of sperm and egg is absurd. In their view, sperm may prepare the way for the entry of the child into the womb, but the spirit of the child appears in the father's dreams or inner awareness before conception (Lawlor, 1991, p. 159).

It seems that native Australians also believe, and experience, that a woman can be spiritually fertilised by coming into contact with a power related to a specific place. Abram (1996) described this, citing works by Chatwin; Strehlow; and Tatz, which explore the cosmologies of the Aboriginal people;

Every ancestor, while chanting his or her way across the land during the Dreamtime, also deposited a trail of "spirit children" along the line of

his footsteps. These "life cells" are children not yet born: they lie in a kind of potential state in the ground, waiting. While sexual intercourse between a man and a woman is thought, by traditional Aboriginal persons, to *prepare* the woman for conception, the actual conception is assumed to occur much later, when the already pregnant woman is out on her daily rounds gathering roots and edible grubs, and she happens to step upon (or even near) a song couplet. The "spirit child" lying beneath the ground at that spot slips up into her at that moment (p. 167).

This story of conception is obviously very different from the conception story of biological science. However, regardless of which story we believe, the evidence of the studies cited above suggests that some form of internal regulation of conception was operating to prevent pregnancy despite frequent sexual intercourse (and the absence of any observed methods of physical contraception). It seems that if this was the case, the process was operating out of consciousness, in the sense that a strong consciously held belief structure or cosmology precluded conception under certain conditions. The people of these cultures simply did not believe that pregnancy could occur under certain conditions, and, in the majority of cases, it did not.

In making sense of what may appear to be impossible ignorance on the part of the groups described, it is important to note that knowledge of sexual reproduction is not innate. We are taught the information very much as children in other cultures learn about the belief structures by which their elders make sense of the world; we need only listen to children wondering whether

"kissing will make you pregnant", or whether a girl "gets pregnant through her belly button". Just over one hundred years ago, nineteenth century medicine was divided about theories of menstruation, with some physicians postulating a link between menstruation and ovulation, and others arguing that it was a pathology. The universal belief, with very few exceptions during the nineteenth century, was that conception occurred at menstruation; this was, in fact, only refuted in 1929-39 by researchers in Japan and Austria (Davis, 1974).

It has, in fact, been suggested that "it is, so to speak, a higher level of thinking to move away from the common sense observable facts of female fertility and conceptualise a symbolic creativity" (Lerner, 1986, p. 151). The biological role of the male in impregnation was often not given credence in ancient history and mythology; women impregnated by means not involving mortal men have been described in myths and literature even in historical eras, and parthenogenesis is also often described, with women becoming pregnant autonomously, without the fertilisation of man or god. In fact, spontaneous generation has been the subject of contemporary research, with somewhat astonishing results. Scientists have reported techniques of activation of eggs (silkworm, mouse, and bovine) toward parthenogenetic development (Lechniak, Cieslak, & Gosnowski, 1998; Loi, Ledda, Fulka, Cappai, & Moor, 1998; Nimura & Asami, 1997; Singh, Ahsan, & Datta, 1997).

Power and control: Male envy

Anthropology also offers some support for the suggestion that male jealousy of women's procreative powers has strongly influenced the respect accorded the functions of the female body, and, therefore, women's access to the mysteries of primarily feminine processes such as fertility management. It has been found that "men are thought to envy or fear female bodies and their reproductive powers; as a result men impose restrictions on women during menstruation or childbirth" (Tiffany & Adams, 1985, p. 18). Bettelheim (1955) first introduced the term "vagina envy" in his interpretation of initiation rites from the perspective of masculine envy and bias. He suggested that "the phenomenon is much more complex than the term indicates, including, in addition, envy of and fascination with female breasts and lactation, with pregnancy and childbearing" (p. 20).

Related to this, male genital mutilations and their associated ceremonies are important events in many cultures (Paige & Paige, 1981). Several major theoretical traditions have offered explanations for these practices. Although somewhat controversial, the explanation that offers most to the current paper is that proposed by Bettelheim (1955), who drew strongly on psychoanalytic theory in his discussion of male envy, citing Landauer who referred to male envy in connection with his theory that it was men's disappointment in their ability to create human beings that led them to intellectual creation, and Zilboorg, who suggested that "woman envy on the part of the man ..... is psychogenetically older and therefore more



fundamental" than penis envy. Within the psychoanalytic framework, male envy is also referred to by Jacobsen (1950), Fromm (1951), and Horney (1967), who asked, "is not the tremendous strength in men of the impulse to creative works in every field precisely due to their feeling of playing a relatively small part in the creation of living things which consistently impels them to an overcompensation in achievement?" (p. 61).

Specifically, Bettelheim (1955) proposed that male genital mutilation serves to strengthen identification with females and is a consequence of envy of female sexual development. Early observations of the Australian aboriginal practice of subincision offers support for this hypothesis (Ashley-Montagu, cited in Paige & Paige, 1981; Spencer & Gillen, 1904). Subincision is a radical surgical procedure in which a cut is made in the ventral aspect of the penis; in many cases the incision is large enough to lay open most of the length of the penile urethra. The subincision wound was referred to by the same terms as those used to describe the vagina or womb, and the bleeding from the wound was equated with menstrual bleeding. This equating of bleeding from male genital mutilation with women's menstruation has also been observed in Wogeo and closely related Papuan cultures, where the bleeding was called "men's menstruation" (Hogbin, 1970).

Bettelheim (1955) cited Berndt's report on another aboriginal rite, that of the "Kunapi", as further evidence of the fascination of men with female sex functions, and the ritualisations of this envy. This particular rite is

LIBRARY  
H.S. YOUNG



is coming out, and the Snake is smelling it and coming closer. It's better for you to go on dancing."

So the younger sister continued, and again Julunggul stopped and watched. In this way, the Wawilak danced in turns; when the younger sister danced, the Snake stopped; and when the older one continued, she came forward again. But the younger sister's intensive activity caused her menstruation to begin, and the snake, smelling the menstrual blood and attracted by it, came forward without hesitation. The Wawilak ran into their hut, and, with the baby, sat waiting inside. When Julunggul finally put her head into the hut, she sprayed the women and the child with saliva from her throat to make them very slippery and then swallowed the baby, then the mother, and finally the younger sister (Berndt, cited in Bettelheim, 1955, pp. 171-172).

It can be seen from the myth that it is the female functions which involve blood which attract the great snake. The essentially female sex functions of childbirth and menstruation arouse the snake which is attracted to the women and puts its head inside the hut and spouts forth a slippery substance, a saliva which is called by a word which also designates semen (Berndt, cited in Bettelheim, 1955). It seems likely that the symbolic intercourse of the snake entering the hut represents a means of acquiring or being a part of the female sex functions, especially as intercourse for the Aboriginal people is not experienced primarily as an act of procreation, but, as Bettelheim suggests, may well be associated with merging psychologically and physically. The swallowing of the three females in the myth also suggests acquiring the stages of female development (child, pubescent girl, childbearing woman) by oral incorporation. Berndt concludes that the subincised penis



symbolises all that is "essential in the process of fructification".

The actual Kunapipi rites followed the mythical account closely.

Bettleheim (1955) described that in some areas, blood from the arm substitutes for blood coming from the penis;

after the first ceremony, the novices, after being smeared with red ochre and blood from the arm, are taken away to meet the Julunngal. As far as the women are officially concerned, the boys are swallowed by the snake, and they are not supposed to return to the society of women until they are reborn at the end of the Kunapipi (p. 173).

He is quite clear that "there is no doubt that circumcision and subincision are directly connected with the myths of the Wawilak sisters", indicating that the Kunapipi rites symbolise the wish of men for female sex characteristics and functions. The men from the tribe reported knowing that the object of the sacred rituals (fertility and everything connected with it) belonged to the women, although it was possible for them to "steal" these. Bettelheim (1955) concluded that anthropological observations lend themselves to the interpretation that initiation rites were designed to compensate for what might have been considered male physiological deficiency in procreation. Another practice which has been observed in modern, industrial cultures as well as pre-industrial cultures is that of couvade, in which fathers or men about to become fathers, ritually go through the motions of labour and childbirth. Bettelheim suggested that men need this to fill the "emotional vacuum" created by their inability to bear children.



These theories of male envy have not, however, been without critics. While Bettelheim (1955) himself cautioned that assigning only one main motive or cause to a phenomenon as complex as initiation rites is essentially unsatisfactory, Paige and Paige (1981) have been critical of Bettelheim's womb envy theory, preferring to explain ritual practices in terms of the widely held belief in "female pollution", whereby the issues focus on power rather than procreation. Yet, even when the origins of menstrual avoidance practices are explained in terms of male concerns about power and control, they reflect a desire to take something back from the females. In particular, Paige and Paige described the practices of the Mundurucu of Brazil, who believe that the gender that controls the musical instruments also controls the society. In this culture, it is believed that women originally controlled the instruments and, although men took control from them, women are constantly attempting to retrieve it. This belief is reflected in the widespread practice of protecting sacred objects from female "pollution". It has been proposed that a contemporary version of stealing the musical instruments can be seen in reproductive technologies which contribute to the "violation and struggle for the control over women's bodies" (Gupta, 1991, p. 93).

It is curious that menstruating women are considered particularly "polluting", especially in the light of the mythological power of the "wise blood" discussed earlier. Anthropologist, Robert Murphy (cited in Paige & Paige, 1981) has proposed that the structural segregation and fear of women among the Mundurucu were mechanisms by which men preserved their dominance



over women. The Mundurucu themselves described the underlying motive of patriarchal dominance behind menstrual taboos; perhaps these "primitive" people can offer some insight into the motives underlying female "pollution" in Judeo-Christian teachings! It could be that the practices of the Mundurucu offer a metaphor for the origins of the menstrual taboo throughout history and across cultures; a determined effort to wrest power from women. Several surveys of contemporary attitudes and practices surrounding menarche, menstruation, pregnancy, and the post-partum period indicate a continuing belief in the "polluting" quality of female sexuality and fertility (Dexter, 1990; Weideger, 1976). These attitudes have important implications for women's experience of fertility management generally, and especially birth control practices which require any degree of autonomy.

It has been noted that periodic menstrual bleeding is usually considered significant as the indicator of continued fertility, especially in cultures where numerous children are desirable in terms of status and power; it is, however, arguable that this interpretation is misleading and may, in fact, have distorted accounts of birth control practices historically and cross-culturally. It has often been proposed that reproductive rituals are bargaining tactics to resolve critical socio-political dilemmas produced by events in the human reproductive cycle (Paige & Paige, 1981). It seems that most researchers agree that the human reproductive cycle produces dilemmas in all societies, including our own. The overriding desirability of fertility is often assumed or interpreted by anthropologists as the norm for pre-industrial cultures, predisposing



researchers to interpret the many remedies and rituals associated with menstruation as measures designed to ensure continued fertility rather than as fertility control measures. Schreiber (1974), for example, has described several methods used by women in different cultures to regulate menstruation; dreaming, avoiding strong emotions, seeking visions, taking hot baths, and drinking special herbal concoctions. These practices can as easily be understood as methods of controlling fertility than as methods for displaying continued fertility through menstruation. This sort of misinterpretation may explain the apparent dearth of references to effective birth control practices in the literature.

Offering further evidence for the idea of controlling rather than increasing fertility, studies of population phenomena in ethnology and anthropological archaeology have discussed the influence of spontaneous abortion on reproduction (Harris & Ross, 1987). This may have been especially prevalent among prehistoric foragers, where being able to control fertility in response to climate, food supply, mobility of the group, and other conditions may have ensured survival. In his study of Aboriginal culture, Lawlor (1991) clearly stated that aboriginal men do not consider children a means of perpetuating their individual achievements and that continued fertility has only become important in cultures where the emphasis is on "conquering nature and acquiring land to establish secure, powerful agricultural settlements" (p. 163). His observations of Aboriginal childbearing and rearing practices indicated that the low, stable Aboriginal population was due to the



innate ability of the women to "monitor conception and childbirth and avoid the burdens of unnecessary birth" (p. 163), and that it is the patriarchal social order which has eroded this ability.

If, however, as much anthropological research claims, menstruation is a display of the valuable state of continued fertility, than why the widespread practice of menstrual segregation and taboos? The interpretations of ethnographic data have not successfully explained this apparent paradox. Perhaps a more consistent explanation can be found in the concept of female power over procreation; from this perspective, menstruation could be seen as a sign that the woman is not pregnant, that the power of creating life is hers, a constant reminder of the feminine power of creation which is inaccessible to the male in any direct way, and is, therefore, a threat to patriarchal dominance. In his psychoanalytic discussion of male ambivalence toward menstruation, Devereux (1950) concluded that menstrual taboos reflect women's exalted state and their real power as propagators of the species.

There are, therefore, several levels at which the information in this chapter can be understood, from the metaphysical to the biological. Hints of a mind-body relationship in conception appear in mythology through the Medusa, and in anthropology through ethnographic reports. The determined effort of man in many cultures to take back the power of creation from women is also evident in anthropological data. While it may not be clear what the relationship between ancient rituals of worship, the cultural beliefs of specific



groups of people, and modern woman is, it is, perhaps, in understanding the significance of knowledge, belief and enculturation in shaping people's reality that the information in this chapter has most to offer. What knowledge and beliefs contribute to the way the women in the present study experience reality? Are the important factors similar to those suggested by mythology and anthropological research: power and control, and the prevailing beliefs about how reproduction works?



## CHAPTER FOUR

Psychobiology

The study of psychobiology is very much a part of the scientific model which has been questioned at times in this paper. While it is important to question the premises upon which 'reality' rests, it is also important to understand that there are many views of reality which contribute to a thorough exploration. Biological science does have much to offer the exploration of women's subjective experience of internal regulation of conception. In one sense, however, it may not offer much at all as subjective experience is, after all, just that, the experience of an individual which needs no external verification or support. On the other hand, it is notoriously easy to dismiss subjective experience as merely 'imagination' or 'fantasy', inventions of mind with no basis in consensus reality. As already stated, it is well recognised that this is even more likely when the subjective reports come from women. Current scientific research is exploring the area of mind-body communication and is, in fact, reporting findings which offer an understanding of what could be happening when a woman claims to regulate fertility through an internal



mind-body process. The current understandings of psychobiology also serve to link the diverse cross-cultural reports of fertility control; the mind-body process which prevents conception for the African woman jumping over a bush, the Aboriginal woman not inviting the spirit of the child to enter, and my experience of internal regulation of fertility can all be described psychobiologically.

In an early paper on the mind-body connection, Bowers (1977) suggested that the

entire human body can be viewed as an interlocking network of informational systems - genetic, immunological, hormonal, and so on. These systems each have their own codes, and the transmission of information between systems requires some sort of transducer that allows the code of one system ..... to be translated into the code of another system ..... (p. 231).

It was Hans Selye (1936; 1976) who first provided a theory of how mental and/or physical stress is transduced into "psychosomatic problems" by the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis of the endocrine system. Subsequent discoveries suggested the pathways by which mind regulation of body processes could occur: secretory cells within the hypothalamus could function as molecular information transducers by converting the neural impulses that encoded "mind" into the hormonal messenger molecules of the endocrine system that regulated "body" (Harris, 1948; Scharrer & Scharrer, 1940). More recent research has suggested that the mind-body relationship is even more immediate and less separate than these earlier theories indicate (Pert, 1997).



### The human reproductive cycle

The reproductive cycle in the human female is known as the menstrual cycle because the end of each cycle is marked by the bleeding of menstruation. Long before there was any understanding of internal mechanisms of the menstrual cycle, this periodic bleeding represented woman's relationship with the cycles of the moon and the changing seasons. It is now understood that the anterior pituitary in the brain produces a succession of hormones during the menstrual cycle and that the relative concentrations of these hormones control the changes in the uterus. The cycle can be said to start when the pituitary produces a hormone which stimulates the growth of the follicle and egg in the ovary (follicle stimulating hormone, FSH); then the production of FSH falls off, and the next hormone produced by the pituitary (luteinising hormone, LH) induces ovulation and the formation of a corpus luteum in the ovary from the burst follicle. A third pituitary hormone (Luteotropic hormone, LTH) maintains the corpus luteum and stimulates it to produce progesterone which maintains the wall of the uterus in a suitable state for the embryo.

It is also known that the changing secretory activity of the pituitary is at least partly controlled by feedback from the ovary. Just as the pituitary secretes FSH. at the beginning of the cycle to stimulate the development of the follicle, the growing follicle secretes oestrogen from cells in one layer of the follicle, causing the level of oestrogen in the blood to rise. These higher



concentrations of oestrogen in the blood inhibit the production of FSH. by the pituitary which switches instead to the production of LH and LTH, inducing ovulation. While the corpus luteum is developing and continuing to secrete hormones, this continues to suppress the secretion of FSH. If no embryo is implanted in the uterus, the corpus luteum degenerates, the level of oestrogen and progesterone in the blood falls, and the pituitary starts to produce FSH once more. This cycle is now relatively well understood, and is the basis for the contraceptive pill which prevents conception by regulating hormone levels.

What does psychobiology say about the regulation of this process through an internal mind-body process, without external intervention? It is symptomatic of scientific research that most of the evidence available is based on pathology, albeit from the perspective of healing, rather than on investigation of non-pathological processes. While there is, therefore, no directly related research, the study of mind-body communication does provide a basis for understanding psychobiological regulation of a process such as reproduction.

Pathways of mind-body communication: Mind modulation of the endocrine system

As early as last century, James Braid (cited in Tinterow, 1970) invented the term "psychophysiological" to denote the phenomena of the reciprocal actions of mind and matter on each other. During the past half century, the study of stress and psychosomatic phenomena has prompted the investigation



of mind-body communication. Selye's (1936; 1976) ground breaking work on biological stress syndrome was in agreement with the anatomical research of Papez (1937) who demonstrated that mental experience was transduced into the physiological responses characteristic of emotions in a circuit of brain structures now called the limbic-hypothalamic system. This was clarified further by the discovery of "secretory cells" within the hypothalamus which could function as molecular information transducers by converting neural impulses into hormonal messenger molecules of the endocrine system (Harris, 1948; Scharrer & Scharrer, 1940). In other words, there was a recognised pathway by which "mind" (neural impulses) could communicate with "body" (hormonal molecules). Rossi (1988) has provided a comprehensive analysis of psychobiological research into mind-body communication (to the time of publication) as it relates to mind-body healing, as well as memory and learning.

The endocrine system is comprised of many organs located throughout the body, each of which secretes hormones into the bloodstream to regulate cellular metabolic functions such as growth, activity level, and sexuality. It has been established that the pituitary gland at the base of the brain sends out hormones as "messenger molecules" to regulate all the other hormone-producing organs of the body. The pituitary has, in turn, been understood to be modulated by the limbic-hypothalamic system. Central to this system is the hypothalamus which acts to pick up information about the internal environment from the blood and cerebro-spinal fluid, and about the external environment



from the sense organs. The limbic-hypothalamic system has been understood to be the major centre for integrating this information with the processes of mind and then transducing this information to the pituitary which regulates all the other organs of the endocrine system (Rossi, 1988).

Rossi (1988) pointed out that since many of the multiple functions of hormones are mediated either directly or indirectly by the limbic-hypothalamic-pituitary system, they are accessible to mind modulation and hypnotherapeutic intervention. In other words, the activity of hormones can be modulated by significant life experiences, mental, emotional and physical processes, and encoded in memory, learning, and behaviour. The implications of this for the present paper become more obvious in the light of research which has demonstrated that progesterone levels have been shown experimentally to be implicated in behavioural and psychological responses (Stewart, Krebs, & Kaczender, 1971). Other research has implicated the pituitary hormone, B-endorphin, in the regulation of LH in women with normal periods (Blankstein, Reyes, Winter, & Faiman, 1981). The close relationship between internal (mind) states and the central nervous system release of endorphins (Davis, 1984) lends weight to a theoretical hypothesis of internal regulation of reproductive hormone secretion via endorphin levels.

Specific research into the neuroendocrine control of human reproduction is a relatively recent area of study. Previously this was hampered by obstacles to the study of gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH)



(Crowley, Whitcomb, Jameson, Weiss, Finkelstein, & O'Dea, 1991), a hypothalamic hormone which controls the synthesis and secretion of the pituitary gonadotropin hormones, LH and FSH. It was initially found that the rapid metabolism of GnRH made its direct measurement in the peripheral circulation limited in its usefulness in defining the neuroendocrine control of human reproduction (Handelsman, Jansen, Boylan, Spaliviero, & Turtle, 1984; Spratt, Crowley, Butler, Hoffman, Conn, & Badger, 1985). Measurement was also complicated by the relative inaccessibility of the blood supply close to the point of secretion. Based on the experimental evidence from several species that release of LH from the anterior pituitary reflects secretion of GnRH by the hypothalamus (Clark & Cummins, 1982; Levine, Pau, Ramirez, & Jackson, 1982; Karsch, Bittman, Foster, Goodman, Legan, & Robinson, 1984), the indirect measurement of GnRH secretion has become increasingly accessible (Hayes & Crowley, 1998), resulting in a clearer understanding of the hypothalamic control of the neuroendocrine regulation of gonadotropin secretion in the human.

Research has suggested that the ability to alter the pattern of GnRH stimulation is an essential component of the regulation of reproduction in mammals (Marshall, Dalkin, Haisenleder, Paul, Ortolano, & Kelck, 1991). The information in this area, coupled with the advances in understanding the role of the limbic-hypothalamic system in mind-body communication, suggest pathways by which psycho-biological regulation of conception might occur.



The long history of hypnotherapeutic intervention in menstrual disorders also suggests a link between states of mind and reproductive hormones (Crasilneck & Hall, 1984; Erickson, 1960). Milton Erickson reported that menstruation could be skipped, precipitated, interrupted, or prolonged as a function of emotional stress. It has been hypothesised that stress-related distortions in the central nervous system release of B-endorphin are related to amenorrhoea (lack of menstruation), and perhaps other menstrual disorders such as dysmenorrhoea (painful menstruation) and premenstrual syndrome (Blankstein et al., 1981).

One branch of psychobiology, psychoneuroimmunology, specifically explores the communication links between the brain and the immune system. These links have been established through experiments which have demonstrated both subconscious and conscious control of the immune system (Achterberg, 1985; Ader, Felton & Cohen, 1991; Hall, cited in Pert, 1997). Using self-regulatory practices such as relaxation, self-hypnosis, imagery, and biofeedback training, it has been demonstrated that conscious intervention can directly affect cellular function in the immune system. Biofeedback research has demonstrated that "there has not been a body function that couldn't be controlled to some extent once it was adequately monitored and information provided to the subject through rapid feedback" (Achterberg, 1985, p. 199). It is, however, the less tangible forms of mind-body communication, such as the use of imagery, which are most relevant to internal regulation of fertility. The role of the imagination in healing suggests a more subtle, yet



even more direct, access to mind-body communication pathways.

If the immune system can be altered by conscious intervention, it seems likely that this is also the case for the reproductive system. Research over the last twenty years has extended the traditional role of endocrine hormones to include their functions as neurotransmitters and neuromodulators that facilitate mind-body communication within the brain itself (Guillemin, 1978; Henry, 1982; Snyder, 1980). In particular, the pituitary hormones, endorphins or enkephalins, have been found to work in this way in modulating stress, pain, moods, sexuality, and appetite (Davis, 1984). Another substance known as inhibin is implicated in regulation of FSH (Follicle Stimulating Hormone) in the menstrual cycle and seems to be closely linked to hypothalamic-pituitary function (Groome, Illingworth, O'Brien, Cooke, Ganesan, Baird, & McNeilly, 1994). Inhibin has also been linked to "diminished ovarian reserve", one indicator of infertility (Seifer & Lambert-Messerlian (1997). Of particular relevance to psychobiological birth control is the finding that women with "unexplained infertility" have subtle disturbances in the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis compared with their fertile counterparts (Leach, Maghissi, Kamran, Randolph, Reame, Blacker, Ginsburg, & Diamond, 1997). Only one of the research papers I have read so far suggests that the effects of compounds such as inhibin could be important in birth control, suggesting they might form the basis for explaining "novel" contraceptive interventions.

One of the pioneers of psychoneuroimmunology, Candice Pert (1997),



has offered an even more precise understanding of how mind-body communication works. She proposed that the "emotional brain" can no longer be confined to the classical locations of the amygdala, hippocampus, and hypothalamus, and that mind-body interaction is even more subtle and complex than the pituitary-hypothalamic model of information transduction. The basic elements of this complexity are "receptor molecules", chemicals which

hover in the membranes of your cells, dancing and vibrating, waiting to pick up messages carried by other vibrating little creatures ..... which come cruising along - diffusing - through the fluids surrounding each cell ..... they cluster in the cellular membrane waiting for the right chemical keys to swim up to them through the extracellular fluid and then mount them by fitting into their keyholes - a process known as binding (p. 23).

The chemical key that binds to the receptor, and works to allow information to enter the cell, is called a "ligand". Ligands come in three chemical types, neurotransmitters, steroids, and peptides. Peptides are the most numerous and play a wide role in regulating practically all life processes. It has long been understood that neurotransmitters act by jumping from one neuron to another in the nervous system carrying messages for "on" or "off", telling the cell whether to discharge electricity or not. Peptides, on the other hand, can act like neurotransmitters and can also move through extracellular space in the blood and cerebrospinal fluid, acting even more directly by causing complex changes in the cell whose receptor they lock onto.



Pert (1997) performed numerous mapping studies in the brain of both the peptides and the receptors, discovering that the peptides showed up in areas of the brain *and* in other areas of the body. It is now understood that the peptide network extends beyond the brain to organs, tissue, skin, muscle, endocrine glands, and the autonomic nervous system, and across the endocrine, neurological, gastrointestinal, and immune systems. In fact, many substances previously identified as something else are now understood to be peptides. Pert calls them "informational substances", the true messenger molecules which distribute information throughout the organism. Research is still exploring the precise connections among all parts of the body suggested by peptide activity. In his review of the psychobiology of mind-body healing, Rossi (1988) presented a vast body of research findings in support of the conclusion that "there is no mysterious gap between mind and body ..... memory, learning, and behaviour processes encoded in the limbic-hypothalamic and closely related systems are the major information transducers that bridge the Cartesian dichotomy between mind and body" (p. 203). Pert (1997) has extended the classical location of the emotional brain to other anatomical locations, saying that "the new work suggests there are almost infinite pathways for the conscious mind to access - and modify - the unconscious mind and the body" (p. 204). The complex mind-body relationship which modern science is investigating does, therefore, offer a rational explanation for a process such as psychobiological birth control.

There is, then, a meeting place for the teachings and practices from



ancient rituals and mysteries, and modern scientific approaches. Perhaps this is an appropriate metaphor for the new consciousness which is being heralded as humanity moves into a new era; a respect and regard for the teachings of mythology and ancient religions, with the leading edge of scientific research to place these in a context that satisfies the rational demands of the disciples of the contemporary worship of scientific principles.

Obviously, in the terms of biological science, there is more work to be done with this idea of psychobiological birth control; it remains an untested hypothesis in this area. Yet, it is an hypothesis based on an ever increasing foundation of research that is scientifically well documented. Contemporary science is presenting theories so radical that there is little research to verify or deny their validity. Physics, for example, has adopted a new rationale, recognising an inherent connection between observer and observed, suggesting a model of interconnectedness which is consistent with the relationship between psyche and matter described by Pert and discussed in studies of alchemy and Jungian psychology, "all outer events in life are in a way only similes; they are only parables of an inner process, synchronistic symbolisations" (von Franz, 1980, p. 259).

It is hoped that if and when science turns its attention to psychobiological birth control, it will be within the context of the psychological, mythological, and historical perspectives presented in this paper. Otherwise, such research could be merely another link in the chain of psychobiological



connections, rather than an investigation of true reproductive autonomy for women.



## CHAPTER FIVE

Part OneSelf-enquiry: Heuristics

This chapter needs to be understood in terms of the phenomenological practice of "bracketing" in which ideas and associations which arise for a researcher are recorded and analysed separately from the main body of the work. This separation does not imply that the material is any less important but is a recognition that it is different from the more formal data gathering and analysis. This difference can be understood in terms of Husserl's (1931) concept of intentionality. The goal of the research is to answer specific questions about the phenomenon (the experience of conscious internal regulation of fertility is the intentional object) and yet the consequences of the process of research are also important to the overall analysis, especially from a heuristic perspective. It is these consequences of the process of research as they have become present in my subjective experience as researcher that are addressed in this chapter, bracketed for clarity and to distinguish them from the intention to investigate the phenomenon of conscious internal regulation of fertility. While this distinction has been made for the sake of



clarity, it is important to note that it is, in one sense, purely arbitrary as it can be argued that there is actually a constant ongoing interaction between the perceiver and the perceived, the mutual process of attraction, attention, and experience described by Merleau-Ponty (1962; 1964; 1968).

The purpose of this part of the chapter is to provide a theoretical and conceptual context for the autobiographic material which has accompanied the research. How does the personal subjective experience of the author contribute to a scientific search for meaning and knowledge? Most systematic forms for investigating human experience have deleted the self of the researcher from the study. It can, of course, be argued that as this deletion assumes a distinction between the observer and that which is observed, it is increasingly suspect as this distinction has been shown to be less reliable than once supposed. Heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990) assumes no such distinction, requiring that the research question has a personal relevance so that the "investigator must have had a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated" (p. 14). The heuristic approach is, therefore, autobiographic. This is reflected in the current work by the inclusion of story, dreams, reflections, and images related to my subjective experience of the content and process of the research, from initial engagement to creative synthesis (Appendix A). This chronicle of the personal processes involved in the development of the thesis is explored in some detail in Part 2 of this chapter, with particular reference to the feminine archetype as it has emerged during this work.



There is an obvious relationship between phenomenological and heuristic methodology, with both emphasising the primacy of subjective experience. There are, however, also distinctions which explain why I have used a phenomenological approach in gathering and sorting the data from others and refer to heuristics in relation to the autobiographic material.

Douglass and Moustakas (1985) make the following distinctions:

(1) whereas phenomenology encourages a kind of detachment from the phenomenon being investigated, heuristics emphasises connectedness and relationship. (2) Whereas phenomenology permits the researcher to conclude with definitive descriptions of the structures of experience, heuristics leads to depictions of essential meanings and portrayal of the intrigue and personal significance that imbue the search to know. (3) Whereas phenomenological research generally concludes with a presentation of the distilled structures of experience, heuristics may involve reintegration of derived knowledge that itself is an act of creative discovery, a synthesis that includes intuition and tacit understanding. (4) Whereas phenomenology loses the persons in the process of descriptive analysis, in heuristics the research participants remain visible in the examination of the data and continue to be portrayed as whole persons.

Phenomenology ends with the essence of the experience; heuristics retains the essence of the person in the experience.

(p. 43)

As I am interested in both the essence of the experience (my intention is to investigate the phenomenon of conscious internal regulation of fertility) and the essence of the person in the experience (the meaning for all the people involved), it seems appropriate that I have called upon both



approaches. While I acknowledge the distinctions made by Douglass and Moustakas (1985), it seems that an interest in the essence of the experience does not necessarily have to preclude the person, and that the phenomenological approach is, in fact, flexible enough to encompass both. This flexibility of the phenomenological perspective is also suggested by Giorgi (1994), who calls for attention to both form and essence when he suggests that "greater theoretical clarity and consistency as well as deeper reflection or better utilisation of imaginative possibilities still seem to be called for to bring better theoretical conceptualisation and more consistent practices to qualitative research" (p. 190).

To further clarify the heuristic approach, Moustakas (1990) has outlined six basic practices which help to describe the experience of working in this way: (a) identifying with the focus of inquiry, (b) self-dialogue, (c) tacit knowing, (d) intuition, (e) indwelling, (f) focusing, (g) the internal frame of reference. In line with phenomenological methodology, these are all processes which assume the value of subjective experience in exploring the meaning of a phenomenon. The basic premise is that a willingness to enter into internal processing about the focus of investigation ensures that the body of knowledge that emerges throughout the investigation is based on experience, a fundamental tenet of phenomenological research. The difference in the heuristic approach arises from the value placed on the author's autobiographical connections with the material.



Engaging the processes of heuristic enquiry involves an immersion in the process of investigation. It begins with personal awareness which is explicated with reference to a particular phenomenon until insight is achieved, adding to the knowledge and understanding of a critical human experience. In this quest I am searching for factors, connections, relationships, and conditions that underlie a fundamental experience of internal processing that raises many questions about the mind and the body, and about scientific, spiritual, and cultural beliefs and practices. These questions cannot be answered from outside the phenomenon; they must be addressed through ideas, experiences, visions, images, and dreams that connect me to the material, so that I learn to perceive and understand in a different way. As many women have said before, just doing something spontaneously is quite different from understanding what it is we do and then being able to explain it theoretically and conceptually. I want to maintain this connection between doing a thing and discovering ways of understanding and explaining what it means and how it is that I am doing it.

Heuristic methodology offers a model for my conviction that any investigation of human experience must involve a process of internal search which requires as many hours of sustained immersion and focused concentration on the meaning and implications of the research topic as are spent on literature searches, data gathering and analysis. I am also sure that this profound inner work accompanies most meaningful research but is rendered invisible in the final presentation. One of the understandings to



emerge from my own immersion in this material is that the very area of women's experience of reproductive autonomy has been so fraught with silence and invisibility that, to do justice to the material, I have to include that which may otherwise be left unspoken or unexpressed and, therefore, unknown.

One of the fundamental processes in heuristic research is identifying with the focus of enquiry. This involves asking what it is like to become the focus of the investigation, so that rather than retaining a stance of objectivity and distance, I am willing to become very involved with, even identified with, the material I am studying. This has been described as an "inverted perspective" (Salk, 1983), so that instead of standing here looking at something, I become the something being observed. This process has been developed as a therapeutic strategy in the Gestalt tradition (Stevens, 1971). A full description of instructions for the process offers some understanding of the sort of focused concentration used in heuristic research;

now try this identification experiment yourself. Wherever you are, let your awareness wander, and notice something that stands out in your awareness, or something that you return to and notice repeatedly ..... Now focus your awareness on whatever emerges and become more aware of it. What is it like? ..... What are its characteristics? ..... What does it do? ..... Take a little time to discover still more details about it ..... Now identify with this thing and become it. Imagine that you are this thing. As this thing what are you like? ..... What are your qualities? ..... Describe yourself: Say to yourself silently, "I am—" ..... What do you do, and what is your existence like as



this thing? ..... See what else you can discover about your experience of being this thing .....

Now take some time to quietly absorb this experience. If you begin to analyse it or think about it just return to the experience itself. Explaining takes you away from your experience (Stevens, 1971, p. 40).

This method of identification is similar to the Buddhist idea that full concentration and meditation on anything can lead to full knowing and understanding of human experience (Nhat Hanh, 1987). While this process begins with a somewhat artificial identification with the object (it seems 'obvious' to rational consciousness that I am not the thing I am observing), maintaining focused attention in this way is understood to yield direct personal experience of new perspectives and understandings. From a phenomenological perspective, this process involves engaging the subjective experience of both the observer and the observed, an extension of intentional analysis (Husserl, 1977) which Merleau-Ponty (1968) may have been pointing to.

The experience of focused attention on a particular object is familiar to me from my initial engagement with internally regulated birth control, which involved an identification of this sort with the bodily processes of reproduction until a solution emerged from the practice. To emulate Stevens (1971) it was as if I said to myself, "If I were the reproductive organs how would I prevent pregnancy; where in the process can it be interrupted?", so that the actual practice of internal regulation of conception emerged from within rather than



from an external idea or instruction. In a similar way, the current exploration of this experience has involved endless hours of sustained immersion in the lived experience of my own story as well as the material emerging from the literature and from talking with other women. What meaning emerges from this material when it is so closely considered that I am no longer on the outside of it looking in, but become identified with it?

Some of the signs of this identification have been the dreams relating to the material, the synchronistic appearance of books and other information, and half formed ideas and understandings that seem to arise of their own accord and lead to the next step of the process. Identification with the area of study demands the sort of immersion whereby the researcher "lives the question in waking, sleeping, and even dream states" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28) so that everything in the researcher's life constellates around the research questions. In this way, anything that is connected to the topic becomes raw material for attention, offering the possibilities for understanding the phenomenon and understanding how to investigate it even more deeply. My own experience of being led via dream images to deeper understandings of the historical and cultural implications of internal regulation of conception are recorded in Appendix A, and explored more fully in Part 2 of this chapter.

The next concept in Moustakas's (1990) description of heuristic research is self-dialogue. This involves asking, "What do I have to say to myself about the phenomenon? What do I have to say directly to the



phenomenon? What does the phenomenon have to say to me? How do I respond to this?". The idea of internal dialogue is an inherent part of analytical psychology (Jung, CW, vol. 8) and has been developed into various therapeutic approaches (Assagioli, 1973; Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951). 'Talking to oneself' about any important project is, of course, a familiar experience; what Moustakas has offered is conscious recognition of the value of engaging this deliberately and purposefully. Self-dialogue can take the form of internal conversations, journal writing, and dreaming. There are many well-known anecdotes of famous discoveries emerging through a dream image. One of the processes described in Appendix A is my engagement with a dream image which emerged when I began this exploration, leading to many valuable understandings. An important understanding to arise from Jungian theory is that internal dialogue can take the form of interaction with autonomous inner figures, in a process of imaginative reflection. This is called "active imagination" and can be differentiated from fantasy and daydreaming by the attitude of responsibility taken by the ego and the respect for the object being engaged (Hall, 1977). What this means is that the ego takes responsibility in the dialogue as if the imaginal sequence were an actual waking situation. This is understood to constellate the conflict of the opposites as described in Chapter 2, allowing engagement with activated images from the unconscious. Once again, this involves the idea of immersion without identification which, in several traditions, is central to the practice of attending to internal process.



Another process valued in heuristic research is tacit knowing, which involves recognising the importance of the invisible, unseen aspects of the experience. Moustakas (1990) has proposed that there are tacit elements as well as unique and distinctive factors of the experience which combine to contribute meaning and understanding. How do I know what I know about this phenomenon? What are the obvious and not so obvious elements which contribute to how human beings experience the phenomenon? Douglass and Moustakas (1985) suggested that considering these questions increases the range and depth of meanings inherent in every significant human experience, and that it is, in fact, tacit knowledge which forms the basis of understanding. It is interesting to me that in the process of researching this topic it has been easier to focus on the unique and distinctive factors of internal regulation of conception than on the tacit knowings. It is, however, these invisible, unseen aspects of the experience which have often informed the direction of this current research. I have experienced this, for example, as a reluctance to continue pursuing a particular direction of research even when it seemed to address a distinctive feature of the experience, and as a sudden strong interest in apparently unrelated material which has, in fact, led directly or indirectly to the next step of the investigation.

Moustakas (1990) called this sort of bridging between tacit and explicit knowledge "intuition", an "internal capacity to make inferences and arrive at a knowledge of underlying structures or dynamics" (p. 23). Intuition in the context of research involves perceiving things as wholes by forming patterns,



relationships, and inferences, and making necessary shifts in method, procedure, direction, and understanding as this is indicated by the material which emerges from the investigation. It describes a non-linear approach to exploring a phenomenon, a dialectic in which the findings and discoveries of one stage inform and prompt the next development and even lead one back to an earlier stage for refinement and elucidation of some of the tacit knowing previously unrevealed.

This recursiveness relates to another heuristic process, "indwelling", which involves following clues wherever they appear and dwelling inside them to expand their meanings and associations until a fundamental insight is achieved. The process of indwelling requires that one remain with an experience and return to it repeatedly until it can be depicted fully in words and pictures and other forms of expression. This involves reflective analysis reminiscent of the process described by M. Esther Harding (1973) in the development of consciousness. The essential qualities and meaning of an experience thus reveal themselves slowly and fully from the inside out rather than from the outside in, as can happen with research which is bound by predetermined parameters.

Another heuristic process closely related to the idea of conscious reflection is "focusing", an approach that has been developed as a therapeutic strategy by Eugene Gendlin (1978). The process of focusing involves an inner attention, a state of observing or witnessing the subjective experience of a



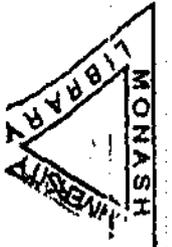
phenomenon in a sustained way. This inner observation allows a conscious relationship with previously unconscious contents, developing meaningful connections and understandings, cognitively, emotionally, and somatically. There are examples of this process in the personal material discussed in Part 2 of this chapter, in which attention focused on the bodily felt experience of a scene from an active imagination or dream sequence gives rise to an image which can then be drawn and explicated. The process of focusing seems similar to Husserl's (1977) idea of epoche, although with less emphasis on analysis and more on the sustained capacity for observing which allows phenomena to reveal themselves rather than having meaning imposed on them. Once again, Merleau-Ponty (1962) seems closer to this with his understanding that perception involves a synchronisation between our own rhythms and the rhythms of the things themselves. The practice of focusing has been central to my experience of this whole area, from the initial mindful attention to body processes, through sustained attention to maintaining the internal dynamic preventing conception, to the sorting of relevant information from the vast body of literature in several areas of study. While this latter process is obviously an intellectual exercise, I would argue that the sort of inner attention described in focusing is also required to differentiate the material.

The focusing process also informed the third stage of data gathering. My concern with the difficulty of translating subjective experience into rational language was partly alleviated by the decision to include images which arose



for participants from sustained attention to somatic experience. The specific procedure used for this is explained further in the chapter on gathering and sorting the material, and the actual script for the focusing process is presented in Appendix G.

What all of the heuristic processes describe is an internal frame of reference, the subjective experience of the person involved, whether that is the experience of those engaged with the phenomenon under investigation or the experience of the researcher conducting the investigation. Viewed from an external frame of reference, these same experiences lose their relevance to the phenomenal world of the experiencing people. Despite a determined effort to maintain the connection between the data gathered in this study and the people providing the data, once I began to order people's responses in any systematic way, I noticed some of the detachment and distillation Douglass and Moustakas (1985) attribute to a phenomenological approach. This is not the case with the autobiographic material which is presented in its raw form as dreams, journal entries, and images (Appendix A), and explicated in Part 2 of this chapter.



Part 2Self enquiry: Hermeneutics

This section explores my experience of researching and writing this thesis by considering my dreams, self-reflective writings, and images recorded during the whole time of engaging the project. This material is presented in chronological order in Appendix A, and will need to be cross-referenced via the date of the dream or journal entry while reading the following analysis.

Using this personal material as data for analysis is consistent with the principles of heuristic research, which proposes that "within each researcher there exists a topic, theme, problem, or question that represents a critical interest and area of search" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27). The idea for the present thesis certainly did exist within me as an experience which developed into a critical interest and an area of search, and the material has involved a deep personal exploration concurrent with the development of the formal academic work. I cannot leave myself out of the process of investigation without creating an even greater (and undeclared) bias than my subjective involvement produces. In this way, I am making explicit the subjective position which inevitably accompanies all researchers and influences our choice of



subject matter and perspective, the literature we consider, the philosophies which underlie our work, and the direction our research takes. I am also exploring the subjective experiences underlying heuristic research which "involves self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery" (Moustakas, 1990), p. 11), investigating the internal processes which accompany and inform the work of formulating, researching and writing a thesis in this way.

One model for exploring the personal processes which accompany research has been offered by Moustakas (1990), who has described six phases of heuristic research: *initial engagement*, *immersion*, *incubation*, *illumination*, *explication*, and *creative synthesis*. These phases all involve the processes explored in Part 1, such as self-dialogue, intuition, focusing, indwelling, and an internal frame of reference. In the present work, the *initial engagement* with a compelling question was the starting point of the whole exploration. There was also ongoing iterative cycling between *immersion* and *incubation*, between concentrated focus on the question and any related material, and reflective time for the inner workings of the tacit dimension and intuition to emerge. An *illumination*, a breakthrough into conscious awareness of understandings and themes, would often occur after a period of immersion and incubation, heralding a new or deeper engagement with the material. A phase of *explication* followed, exploring the nuances and components of the phenomenon from the perspective of the new understanding. In this way, an appreciation of the central themes developed over time, with the essential elements of the final *creative synthesis* building up incrementally. Sometimes it



has seemed that an appropriate metaphor for this process would be doing a jigsaw puzzle without the complete picture as a guide, so that the final form only emerges over time, as each piece settles into place and the connections are made with other pieces.

As well as practices such as focusing and self-reflective writing, the material from dreams was an essential component of this exploration. Jungian psychology has approached dreams as transpersonal or archetypal expressions of patterns involved with life events (Stevens, 1997; Whitmont, 1991). The dreams recorded in Appendix A have been understood in this way, although there are also personal associations with many of them. They have, however, been considered in terms of how they have impacted on or reflected the developmental process of the thesis. There are numerous examples of scientific discovery and literary work which have arisen in response to dreams: Kekule's discovery of the benzene ring, Howe's invention of the sewing machine, Robert Louis Stevenson's writing of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Stevens, 1997), and Michael Bamsley's (1988) development of fractal imaging. My own dreams have informed my work, especially in relation to exploring the archetypal feminine. Once again, referring to the words of Jung (1971),

Together the patient and I address ourselves to the two million-year old man that is in all of us. In the last analysis, most of our difficulties come from losing contact with our instincts, with the age-old unforgotten wisdom stored up in us. And where do we make contact with this old man in us? In our dreams (p. 76).

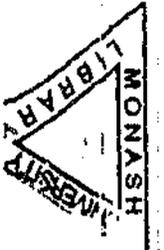


For me it was an old woman who emerged in my dreams (16.1.92), demanding my attention and leading me into an exploration of the feminine archetype.

Stevens (1997) has described the symbols of dream language as the products of the archetypal assimilation of experience, so that archetype + experience = symbol. In this sense, every symbol is a mix of the personal and the collective, that which is individual and that which is universal. This is consistent with the understanding that the archetype itself cannot be known directly, but only through the images and symbols that represent our experience of the archetype. The images that are included in Appendix A are, therefore, my experience of the archetypal energies that have come present through dreams and active imagination. The interpretation of the dream material is not intended as a dream analysis in any formal sense; it serves to locate the dream in relation to the stage of development of the research and to link it to specific issues arising for me at the time, and to themes arising from the literature.

### The archetypal feminine.

One of the most important implications of this material relates to the experience of the archetypal feminine, which emerged consistently in the dream material and the accompanying journal entries and images. This is consistent with the ideas explored in Chapter 2 of the collective emergence of the "conscious feminine" (Zweig, 1990), the new mythologem of the ancient



Goddess "who once ruled earth and heaven before the advent of patriarchy and of the patriarchal religions" (Whitmont, 1982, p. vii). This theme first appeared in a dream (12.5.90) at the time of the initial engagement with the idea of exploring the experience of psycho-biological birth control through the literature, prior to beginning the formal academic work on the thesis. I was reading books which discussed the historical damage to the feminine principle personally, socially, politically, and spiritually. This is reflected in the dream in which "my ..... daughter is pierced by pellets", suggesting a very personal experience of the wounding of the feminine. The loss of feminine wisdom and feminine mysteries during the transition from matrifocal to patriarchal culture was explicitly or implicitly evident in the literature, and the dream suggested the need to respond to the material in ways other than intellectual processing; the dream was clear that this was *my* daughter who had been wounded and seemed to be asking me to decide who could be trusted to attend to this.

One of the first questions to form in the initial engagement of the research was, therefore, about the relationship between the feminine archetype and the experience of conscious internal regulation of fertility. It has been said that

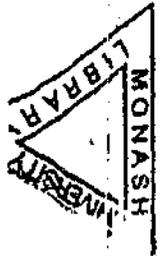
the engagement or encountering of a question that holds personal power is a process that requires inner receptiveness, a willingness to enter fully into the theme, and to discover from within the spectrum of life experiences that which will clarify and expand knowledge of the topic and illuminate the terms of the question (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27).

There was no doubt that the question about the archetypal feminine held



"personal power" and, in retrospect, has been one of the central questions of the whole thesis. One of the functions of the initial engagement in heuristic research is the elucidation of the context from which this sort of question takes form and significance. There is certainly a context suggested by the dream (12.5.90) and the next journal entry (4.6.90) describing an "inner, imperative demand" which was related to my understanding that "the ancient Feminine has become lost within the rational Masculine approach to life; she can no longer be called upon to heal, leaving aspects of the Feminine bereft. Something new is called for". The immersion with the central question about the relationship of the archetypal feminine to psychobiological birth control did, indeed, involve living the question in "waking, sleeping, and even dream states" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28).

Heuristic research prompts the researcher to be "alert to all possibilities for meaning" and to enter "fully into life with others wherever the theme is being expressed or talked about" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28). This approach describes my engagement with various forms of active exploration of the archetypal feminine, such as a regular fortnightly meeting with a small group of women for the entire time of researching and writing the thesis to explore ancient traditional practices from the time when "God was a woman" (Stone, 1978), when the "highest power in the universe was seen as the feminine power to give and sustain life, the power incarnated in the body of a woman" (Eisler, 1991, p. 4). This exploration was based on the information emerging from the women's spirituality movement, addressing such subjects as



witchcraft, paganism, Goddess worship, and celebration of equinoxes and solstices in the style of the old religions (Starhawk, 1989; Walker, 1990). The original idea for forming this group arose during an inner dialogue with a feminine figure whom I identified as a non-personal representation of the feminine principle; at the time of the dialogue there was no visual form of this figure, although there was an auditory experience of a voice which offered information apparently autonomous from my conscious awareness at the time. The process of dialogue was consistent with active imagination as a form of imaginative reflection, which was described in Part 1 of this chapter.

When Walker (1990) wrote that "the modern women's spirituality movement questions male claims to authority in the creation of ritual as well as in other theological matters" (p. 4), she could also have been describing the dream (6.5.92) in which, as the dreamer, I am

walking down to a gate where the male teachers are standing on an old cart pretending to whip everyone as they are walking through. It is a simulated scene from the Inquisition and they are saying, "Bow to Our Lady". I am saying, "I bow to the lady of the forest".

This was also evident in the dream (9.7.94) in which I, as the dreamer, am talking with a priest and "asking for an all women's day at the church". I was reminded of my paternal grandmother who was born early this century in a small village in the south of Italy and used to meet with only the other women of the village on one night a year (Christmas Eve) to do "women's business". I have no way of knowing this directly, but it is likely that this business was



more Pagan than Christian!

An interesting development in this theme occurred in the dream (26.7.97) where "I am being shown around a huge cathedral by a priest. He is saying that he rents the space for Goddess workshops". Here, after 7 years of consciously exploring the emergence of the archetypal feminine, collectively and personally, was some suggestion of a synthesis of masculine and feminine principles, albeit conditional. This idea of interconnectedness between masculine and feminine has been explored by Riane Eisler (1988) in her description of the "partnership" model of society in which, "beginning with the most fundamental differences in our species, between male and female - diversity is not equated with either inferiority or superiority" (p. xvii). She has strongly argued that

our reconnection with the earlier spiritual tradition of Goddess worship linked to the partnership model of society is more than a reaffirmation of the dignity and worth of half of humanity. Nor is it only a far more comforting and reassuring way of imagining the powers that rule the universe. It also offers us a replacement for the myths and images that have for so long blatantly falsified the most elementary principles of human relations by valuing killing and exploiting more than giving birth and nurturing (p. 194).

The decision to ground the thesis in an historical and cultural perspective was formed through the ongoing exploration of this area of women's spirituality and through the dreams which consistently alerted me the central importance of the feminine principle in my life and, therefore, in my work.



The appearance of the feminine figure, which arose in a dream (16.1.92) with an accompanying experience of terror, followed a dream (31.10.91) in which a feminine form, "a 'demon' woman with hair flying ..... comes straight at my face ..... I am terrified and overwhelmed". I experienced these dreams as "nightmares", dreams from which I woke terrified. I decided to draw the face that was flying at me in the night. This attention to the dream image is consistent with Jung's (1974) idea that

*imaginatio* is the active evocation of (inner) images *secundum naturam*, an authentic feat of thought or ideation, which does not spin aimless and groundless fantasies "into the blue" - does not, that is to say, just play with its objects, but tries to grasp the inner facts and portray them in images true to their nature (p. 241).

The image of the dream figure took form on paper over a period of about twelve months. The feet were last to be drawn, and it was the form of the feet that identified the figure as "Lilith" (Wolkstein & Kramer, 1983), based on images, dating from ancient Sumer, with the characteristic owl's feet. The experience of drawing this image was like the experience of focusing described in Part 1. In focusing, the attention rests with a bodily felt sense and the image or symbol emerges into awareness from this focused attention to inner experience. This is also consistent with my experience of developing the psychobiological birth control practice from the inside-out rather than from the outside-in. My experience of the image was, therefore, that it came present from within my psyche, combining archetype and experience in the manner described by Stevens (1997). The resulting image was, therefore, a symbol which represented my experience of the archetypal feminine at this time.



The emergence of this image was also an example of illumination following a period of cycling between immersion and incubation. I had been immersed in periods of focused reading and study and accompanying periods of reflection with relation to the information from the literature regarding the cultural and historical elements of women's experience of fertility management. The image of "Lilith" certainly illuminated the material which I had been studying. The following information is an explication of the meaning and relevance of the image which I had identified as "Lilith".

One of the extraordinary and surprising aspects of this experience was the similarity of the image to the ancient images of "Lilith", who was the first woman, historically and mythologically exiled to the darkness by a patriarchal religion which could not tolerate her wild feminine nature. William Irwin Thompson (1981), a cultural historian, has written about Lilith,

Other midrashim tell of Adam's life in paradise. It seems that for all his superiority in language, Adam was not happy, for he could see that the animals in the Garden lived in pairs and coupled, but he was alone. Adam tried coupling with the beasts of the field but was unsatisfied and cried out: "Every creature but I has a proper mate!" God heard Adam's lament and was moved to create a mate for him. Since God had made Adam from dust, He made Lilith from filth and sediment. When God presented Lilith to Adam, Adam was overjoyed and enthusiastically set her on the ground and tried to mount her after the fashion of the animals; but Lilith protested and said: "Why should I be on the bottom and you on the top?" Priapic Adam was in no mood to explain the natural order of things (from his point of view) and so he simply tried to compel her obedience by force. In a rage, Lilith uttered the magic name

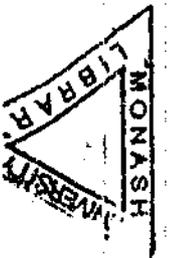


of God, rose into the air, and left him.

It would seem that Adam's knowledge of the Cabbala was shared by Lilith and that God imparted to her the same human excellence that had amazed Samael. Samael had tried to dominate Adam and was defeated by language; Adam tried to dominate Lilith, and he was in turn defeated by language. But there are deeper mysteries present here.

The brain at the top of the spinal column gives Adam mastery of language, and his tongue is an organ of matter which has mastery over the element of air; but this top-heavy mastery is incomplete and unmatched below. At the base of the spinal column, Adam does not have mastery, for he feels lonely and sexually incomplete. "As above, so below" is an axiom from Hermetic mysticism, and in this Hermetic vision of physiology the tongue is connected through the spinal column to the penis. One organ is the master of the "logos spermaticos", the other, the master of the seed of life. In the higher regions of spirit, the spermatic word is master of the elements of fire and air; in the lower regions of matter, the sperm is master of the elements of earth and water. In Lilith the symmetry of "as above, so below" is completed, for she has the female lips of the mouth which can pronounce the magic name of God, and the female lips of the vulva below which can receive the semen of Adam. The tongue and penis are the polarities mediated by the spinal column for the male; and lips and labia majora, the polarities for the female.

The revolt of Lilith therefore expresses the rising up from below of all that would be denied by the rational, male consciousness. Like the ouroboric serpent which bites its own tail, the spinal column brings the mysteries of language and sexuality, mouth and genitals together. What the midrash describes is not simply the division of labor in a patriarchal society, but the structure of consciousness as it is revealed



in the architecture of the human body (pp.16-17).

The relevance of Lilith has also been addressed by Betty De Shong Meador (1992), who has claimed that "we are once again in a period of enormous transition equal to that which took place around 3500 BC. The change comes from a new emergence of the archetypal feminine in her dark and light fullness" (p.126). She has cited Colonna who wrote,

We could, however, postulate a "new consciousness" yet more advanced than the patriarchal, emerging out of the union of both matriarchal and patriarchal elements.....It seems, then, that the myth of Lilith suggests a way to break the fixation with "being below", repressed and maltreated, and there seems to be an analogy here with the lunar, matriarchal spirit that seeks to be accepted into the realm of consciousness.

Meador's description of the dissociation of the female element resonates with my struggle to address this research from the ground of the feminine;

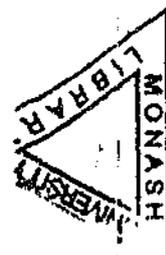
I would say that the dissociation of the female element is a cultural phenomenon acquired through three thousand years of primacy of the patriarchal gods. In the archetypal pattern of the unconscious in our culture, the god An still trembles in terror in the face of the powerful, all-giving mother who holds men in the grip of the mother complex. The god Yahweh rages at disobedient woman and curses the dark reaches of the feminine, binding women to the demanding norms of the culture and to the negative animus (pp. 126-127).

How could it be that this archaic feminine figure had come to me in dreams and active imagination in the early 1990's (before some of this



material was even available in Australia for me to read)? The understanding of the significance of the image followed its appearance as an inner image; the explication followed the illumination. The numinosity of her appearance left me in no doubt of the objective reality of her existence. Yet, what does this mean, to experience a figure which emerges through attending to the inner life of the psyche as having objective reality? Jung himself has noted the difficulty of knowing these archetypal energies in an embodied way; that is, they are easier to know symbolically than to be experienced physically. Awakening one night in terror from one of Lilith's "visits", I found long scratches along one of my arms. My rational mind wanted to explain the scratches as self-inflicted in the fearful scrambling to awaken from the terror, yet there was no sign on the other hand of the blood from the scratches, nor has this ever happened before or since in the tossing and turning that accompanies strong dreaming. It is possible that by describing archetypes as "inner symbolic figures", Jung was not fully acknowledging the very real physical, embodied aspect of archetypal energy, or, perhaps, this is what he meant by the psychoid aspect of the archetype (as discussed in Chapter 2). I am reminded that Jung's (1963) primary knowledge of the archetypal figures of the anima (Salome) and the wise old man (Philemon) was derived from direct personal experience. His extensive research of these figures in the literature of myth, religion, and alchemy followed his own encounter with them.

So, when we consider the reemerging feminine, do we think of this as an idea that is coming back into inner awareness or can we consider the



possibility that this refers to a living, embodied experience that can be as real to women as our monthly bleeding, the frustrations and ecstasies of our lovemaking, the initiations of giving birth, and the transitions of aging? My experience would suggest that this is the case and that, at least for me, this is closely linked to the ability to consciously regulate fertility through an internal process. It has certainly been central to my experience of researching and writing about the experience of conscious internal regulation of fertility.

An experience of active imagination with a feminine figure from a dream (26.3.92) which coincided with the completed drawing of the "Lilith" image revealed the following dialogue from the feminine figure:

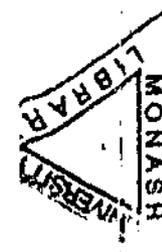
I am tormented and often act angry and wild. There are energies in me which make me act ways that others don't like, that make relationship difficult. I know that men find me hard to be with. I'm not like most women, I'm darker, wilder, more intense, more aggressive. Men don't like me. I probably should go and live on my own. The energy that moves in me is dark, wild, aggressive, not soft, motherly, agreeable, cooperative. I am that which flies at you in your dreams, screaming, scratching, wild, hair flying. I want you to love me. You take the attitude of the men who don't like me, you hold me off. I want to be seen, acknowledged, accepted, loved.

This statement was remarkably like the biblical descriptions of Lilith as the wild feminine who inhabited the nether regions as an outcast; the statement did, however, emerge from inner imaginative reflection before the full explication of Lilith's historical and mythological relevance was consciously understood. This sort of dialogue was experienced as an authentic,



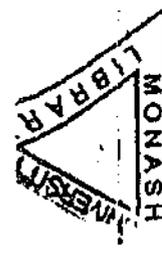
autonomous expression of an inner figure whose point of view was different from my consciously held perspective and yet remarkably consistent with the dream motifs appearing around this time, and the conscious understanding of the "Lilith" figure which eventually developed. The feminine figure in the active imagination was asking to be "seen, acknowledged, accepted, loved", a task I was grappling with in terms of the thesis; how could I ground this work in a true understanding of women's reproductive autonomy even while exploring the subject academically?

There was a resonance with the wild feminine figure from the active imagination in a dream three years later (30.4.95), in which "a dangerously mad woman is being kept under guard". This dream prompted a further immersion and incubation in the archetypal images and the historical material. It was shocking to consider the very premises on which the current culture is established and find a history of brutal destruction and denial of mother-right. The dream was suggesting that the rage and madness of the feminine was poorly contained. Time was needed to discover the implications of this for me as a contemporary woman, and to determine just what aspect of the archetypal feminine it was that was reemerging through the sort of personal investigation I was engaging. It certainly seemed that the feminine figures in my dreams and inner reflections were insisting on an intensely personal engagement with this material. The understandings that developed through this engagement have affected the thesis in the sense that it became clear that a work of this sort could not remain detached and objective in the usual



way. While I was always aware of the personal relevance of the material, I began the project with an intention to research and write the thesis in a more conventional form; the dream material prompted a search for research paradigms that could accommodate the subjectivity of the experience as well as investigating other's experiences of the area, leading to a much richer synthesis of form and essence.

The relevance of the archetypal feminine to the work appeared yet again in a dream (20.11.92) in which "I am going to a house where I have things to do. My husband is ringing up to ask why I am taking so long. I am saying that both my grandmothers have asked me to do things for them". Jung (CW, vol. 17). wrote of the motif of the grandmother in a dream as the manifestation of an archetype, indicating that it is appropriate to interpret this transpersonally. From this perspective, the archetypal feminine from both collective streams were asking me to do something for them. The development of this work about a birth control practice that offers true reproductive autonomy, and may well have been a part of ancient women's mysteries, certainly seemed to be what they were wanting me to do, reinforcing my experience of the imperative nature of this work. A dream (23.2.96) over three years later once again had me encountering the grandmother, although this time "she is much more powerful and sophisticated than I remember her", "she has pretended to be an ignorant peasant woman but is really sophisticated and powerful". The theme of reconnection with the grandmother also appeared in a dream (11.6.96) a few months later,

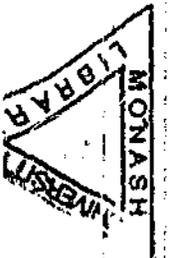


I am eating vegetables which my grandmother has grown. I am nourished by these vegetables. I am wondering how it is that I am experiencing her so strongly now as she has been dead for over a year. I am also wondering how she could have grown these vegetables I am eating. I am wondering if she could have planted the seeds and someone else tended them and harvested them. I am also wondering about how the vegetables have come to me as my father would not have been involved.

The dream understanding that "father" would not have been involved raises the question of the place of the masculine principle in this exploration. Once again, the answer to this question is best addressed through the theme of the archetypal masculine as it has been reflected in the dreams.

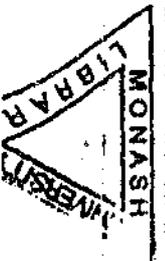
#### The archetypal masculine.

Some of the dream material resonated with Meador's (1992) description of the god Yahweh who "rages at disobedient woman" (p. 127). This theme appeared in the dreams in the form of a masculine figure of a "priest". In the first appearance (20.11.91), the priest figure was wearing a cowl, with its association as a monk's hooded garment. The figure was a force sensed as "evil" which was responsible for making the mother "crazy". The suggestion in the dream was that the "evil" could be managed if it comes in small amounts. The association with this was of the "evil" that has been done to feminine/ instinctual ways of knowing. There was also a realisation that not so long ago (400 years), a woman doing what I am doing (both the birth



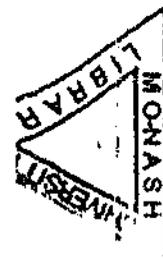
control and writing about it) in certain parts of Europe would have been killed. This understanding made sense of the words from the dream, "No wonder my mother's so crazy" (20.11.90)! The priest type of figure reappeared in the dream (6.5.92) mentioned previously in which a male teacher figure was whipping me for refusing to bow to "Our Lady". While the first priest figure was faceless with an impersonal quality, this teacher figure was more differentiated and personally related, although still collective in the sense of playing a particular role in an established system (either church or school). The next appearance of the priest was in the dream (9/7/94) in which I was asking for "woman's day" at the church; this priest was opposing my demands and I was fearful of the consequences of antagonising him.

I have understood these dreams as responses to the historical information about the religious and political takeover of women's ways of worship and healing, and as a reminder to reflect on the meaning of the historical and political information. The collective implications of the Inquisition for the practice of women's mysteries were becoming clearer during this time period, and there was an immersion in the literature relating to this and also a time of reflecting on the implications of this historical event, which involved both an obvious and a tacit dimension. While the obvious dimension was accessible through the literature, the tacit aspects of this material, often appearing via the dreams, involved my personal response to the material; what did all of this information mean to me as a woman living in Australia and in the 1990's? It is easy to relegate events like the Inquisition to history; the



process of reflection and incubation has, however, suggested that the god who "rages at disobedient woman" (Meador, 1992) is not just an historical artifact or an introject of an authoritarian personal father, but can be understood to be a collective phenomenon which profoundly affects the way women (and men) live their lives.

The possible impact of the Inquisition on birth control practices was explored in Chapter 3; it is interesting that this period of history has also been called "the burning days" (Starhawk, 1989), an echo of my initial dream (12.5.90) in which a fire was burning closer to my wounded daughter. While the discontinuity of oral traditions during the time of the Inquisition does have profound implications for the current thesis, there has also been a personal impact in the form of a subjective experience of fear as this part of the thesis unfolded. Even though I knew rationally that there was no current tangible threat of persecution for exploring this material, there was still a non-rational experience of fear of attack which arose for me in exploring the practice of a birth control method that had, in all probability, been the cause or persecution at other times in history. To propose a method of birth control that offers women true reproductive autonomy is radical, and some of the accompanying ideas are subversive. While there are, therefore, those who would object spiritually or morally or politically to some of the material explored in this paper, it is clearly not a dangerous undertaking these days. The observation of the fearful response raises some interesting questions about the impact of cultural-historical conditioning. Perhaps this phenomenon accompanies any

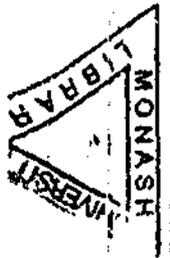


exploration that deviates markedly from current consensus reality? Is it possible that the drastic and usually fatal treatment of anyone who deviated from the collective "rules" at various times and places throughout human history has left a legacy of a sort of collective paranoia which is alleviated by conforming to consensus reality? This hypothesis would be supported by Maslow's (1954) observation that qualities such as autonomy and resistance to enculturation are not easily developed.

The theme of masculine takeover of feminine ground appeared in a dream (23.4.98), in which the masculine figure was not a priest but appeared in the more personal form of father (although the practice of calling priests "father" in the Catholic church does suggest a possible link). In this dream,

I have been travelling for a long time and having many adventures in remote places. I am now at home in my parent's house. I am wanting to sleep. My father is intruding into the room and claiming that everything in it is his. I am leaving.

This dream occurred in the final year of writing the thesis and presented a familiar theme of masculine dominance. In reflecting on this dream I was reminded that the Greek myths presented the stories from the perspective of the "fathers", and the goddesses were defined in relation to the masculine, rather than in their own right. Inanna (Wolkstein & Kramer, 1983) descending in her own right to meet the queen of the Underworld was a very different story from Persephone's abduction by Hades, the masculine ruler of the Underworld (Woolger & Woolger, 1990). Perhaps the images of the archaic



feminine which were emerging in dreams and active imagination had been making this point all along! Perhaps I had received the message by the time of the dream (23.4.98) since, as the dreamer, I do leave the situation. This is repeated in a dream (11.11.98) in which "I am leaving my parent's house as something has happened which I am not happy with". Jungian analyst, Marion Woodman (1993) wrote a book called *Leaving my father's house: A journey to conscious femininity*, in which she described the experience of relating to the emerging feminine,

The eternal feminine is thrusting her way into contemporary consciousness. Shekinah, Kwan Yin, Sophia, whatever her name, she is the manifestation of the divine in matter.....Knowing her has nothing to do with blindly stumbling toward a fate we think we cannot avoid. It has everything to do with developing consciousness until it is strong enough to hold tension as a creative energy.....It is our immediate task to relate to the emerging feminine whether she comes to us in dreams, in the loss of those we love, in body disease, or in ecological distress. Each of us in our own way is being brought face to face with Her challenge (p. 1).

It seems that, for me, the tension has, at least in part, been between the masculine and feminine principles in my own psyche; holding this as creative energy through the work with dreams, active imagination, focusing, and reflection has been an essential part of "being brought face to face with Her challenge".

The final appearance of the priest figure, to the time of writing, occurred in a dream (26.7.97) in which "I am being shown around a huge

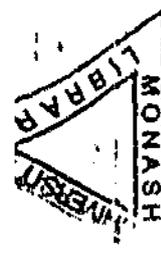


cathedral by a priest. He is saying that he rents the space for Goddess workshops and that he leaves his picture of the Devil as theirs is too 'super-fish-ial' ". The reference to "fish" can be related to Edinger's (1995) interpretation of fish as instinct or ordinary faculties of the mind. Perhaps the priest is still unsure of the instinctual aspect of the feminine principle, preferring the "Devil"? It is interesting that, in the Christian myth, the ruler of the Underworld was a masculine figure from whom no good came while, in the Sumerian myth of Inanna's descent, the ruler of the Underworld was a feminine figure from whom Inanna received initiation and power. Another association arises from the tendency of church officials to confuse goddess worship with devil worship (Gardner, 1970). However this dream is interpreted, there is the juxtaposition of mother goddess and father god, apparently coming together albeit in the father god's house and with some fundamental issues unresolved. One year later, a dream (4.8.98) which came during the final writing up of the thesis seemed to make the priest redundant:

Something is being made and there is much discussion about the details of the making. A voice suddenly is saying, "It's between you and the maker".

If the priest is understood as the one who traditionally mediates between the divine and the personal, interpreting the relationship according to the particular laws of his calling, then a direct relationship with the "maker" does away with the middle man.

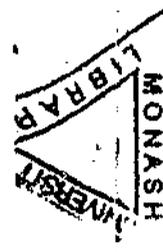
The theme of the masculine principle in the dreams and active



imagination also appeared in the form of an image (11.9.92), which was drawn after using the focusing process to explore the bodily felt sense of the active imagination (11.9.92) in which,

I am in a large house and am entering a room where a beautiful woman, glowing with light, is waiting to embrace me. A small part of me is entering this room while the rest is being kept outside by guards who serve a tall dark man. He has power over me and can keep me from truly being embraced by the feminine principle. He is dark, powerful, demanding, controlling, threatening, ruthless, determined, capable of cruelty. He has me trapped. How do I break free?

The image portrayed a masculine figure with three heads, one of a beast, one of a bird, and one of a man, reaching for a feminine form which was smaller and fainter. The feminine form, in turn, was reaching for a golden ball on the tail of the masculine figure. This was an image of a dynamic relationship which I recognised personally and collectively. What does it mean? As well as the circularity of the connection between masculine and feminine, there are suggestions in this image of the "three brains" described by Paul MacLean (1969), the human brain which also incorporates the still-functioning and much earlier mammalian and reptilian brains. My relationship with these "brains" has needed refining and developing in the course of doing this work; how I "think" about the material on all levels seems to be important. This is consistent with the decision to explore material from ancient history, mythology, and anthropology. Jean Gebser (1991) has offered a comprehensive analysis of different types of consciousness, suggesting that there are archaic, magical, and mythical types of consciousness latent in the



human psyche and that the current dominance of rational consciousness is not necessarily a higher level of functioning. It is the enriched experience and application of all the different types of consciousness that Gebser advocates for optimal functioning. The image does seem to suggest an interrelationship between masculine and feminine and between different types of functioning.

There were also dreams which suggested that my engagement with researching and writing the thesis was altering the internal dynamic with the archetypal masculine. Early in the development of the thesis I dreamt (29.10.91) that

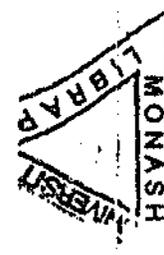
I am working in a therapy session with two women. My Grandfather is in the room observing. As the work is moving into a very painful area for one of the women, I am continuing to confront the dynamics of the process by saying, "So, it's to and fro, up and down, back and forth....". She is sobbing. My grandfather is groaning and clutching his heart. We are carrying him out of the room. His skin is very grey. The rest of the family, Grandmother, mother, and sister, are gathering round and an ambulance is called. I am thinking that this is definitely not my fault, not my responsibility; he didn't have to be in there if he didn't want to. Now my father is sitting in a chair holding his chest. He has been having signs that he is about to have a heart attack. The pain is intensifying and he is saying, "If this keeps up it will end with me dead". I am thinking that it may not need to but he seems resigned. The other women are running around not doing anything definite or particularly useful.

The motif of the "grandfather" can be understood in a similar way to the "grandmother" as an archetypal element. The work I was doing was



threatening to the masculine; "If this keeps up it will end with me dead". This dream can be understood as somewhat prognostic, as my understanding of the dynamics between masculine and feminine principles in history, mythology, religion, and the individual psyche has developed through the course of working on the thesis. What were previously vague understandings of the historical "facts" have become much more informed understandings of obvious and not so obvious historical events and the implications of these for current collective practices, conscious and unconscious. The masculine principle has not fared well in this developmental process! A dream (6.9.92) one year later also reflected this theme as, in the dream, I put down the responsibility for keeping a crippled masculine figure alive.

The context for this transformation of the masculine principle in my psyche has been the experience of the archetypal feminine, prompting a change in the balance between the masculine and feminine principles. The archaic, magical, and mythical feminine images and voices have formed the core of this process. It was the feminine figures in dreams and active imagination who insisted that I engage this task as a personal exploration, telling my "soul story" as one part of the thesis and one part of the new mythologem of the emergence of the archetypal feminine. In her book, *Leaving my father's house*, Marion Woodman (1993) has written of women's dreams, self-reflective writings, and images as "soul stories", naming the synchronicity of the "inner impetus" arising for women in many parts of the world,



Synchronistically, these.....women, unknown to each other, propelled by an inner impetus, began to write their soul stories. I was close to each. I suffered with them, while at the same time holding an objective point of view. I helped bring to consciousness the individual stories.....I saw with my physical eyes, perceived with my inner eye, and empathised with the new life that was desperate to be born (p. 7).

Synchronicity: the relationship of inner and outer.

Another theme to arise from the personal material has been the experience of synchronicity. The collective phenomenon of increasing numbers of books, poetry, images, and music reflecting the feminine principle emerging at the same time as I am dreaming of the archetypal feminine is certainly one example of synchronicity; what was happening within me was also happening out there. Synchronicity has been described by Jung (CW 8) as "the simultaneous occurrence of two meaningfully but not causally connected events" (p. 441), specifically "the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state - and, in some cases, vice versa" (p. 441). The parallels between the dreams and the literature cannot be explained causally as, especially in the case of the earlier dreams, there was no conscious psychic content equivalent to the message of the dream. The recognition of the symbolic meaning of the dream material often occurred as an "ah-ha" sort of experience, an illumination, while reading a



particular book sometime after the dream.

The importance of synchronicity in the heuristic process became clear through a dream (19.6.94) which was a reversal of my ordinary waking consciousness; "A voice says, 'The tree came into blossom; No! The blossom came into the tree'". This served to remind me to allow time for the process of researching and writing and considering, the processes described in heuristic research as immersion and incubation. There was also the understanding that the thesis was not entirely something that I could produce solely by conscious intention; it also had to come to me in some way. This was reflected in the synchronicity between the personal material and the development of the thesis, and the synchronicity of inner and outer events.

There have been numerous experiences of this during the time of working on the thesis. A dream (23.5.91) presented a motif of a fish transforming into a dragon. This was initially explored in terms of the work of Jungian analyst, Edward Edinger (1995), who offered an alchemical description of instinct (fish) transforming into "exalted soul" (dragon). There was an hypothesis formed at the time that perhaps instinct represented the archaic (archetypal) body wisdom involved in psychobiological birth control, while the "exalted soul" might refer to the need for some sort of transformation of instinct in order to write about the process and explore it intellectually. The reference to fish and dragons did, however, reappear in my life in early 1999 in the poetry of Zhou Xuanjing (Cleary, 1996, pp. 71-72), a twelfth century

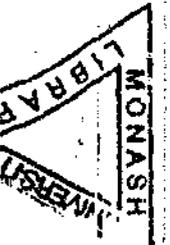


Taoist adept,

My mind is like the autumn  
 In the heartland of Chan;  
 I earnestly sit in mental work  
 From midnight and noon.  
**Fish and dragons are lively;**  
 While the waves are still -  
 There is just the moonlight remaining  
 In the eternal sky.

Clary wrote that "fish and dragons are the ordinary and extraordinary faculties in the mind; the stillness of the waves refers to emotional detachment from the vicissitudes of events" (p. 72). In Chapter 3 of the current thesis, the poem from which this verse comes was interpreted as a description of the process of conscious internal regulation of fertility, in line with an analysis of the poetry from the perspective of principles of an ancient Chinese healing system (Blum, 1996). My dream of the fish and the dragon predated the publication of these works by five years!

There were also experiences of synchronicity in relation to finding the appropriate literature at various stages of the work. There is the example of researching the material on the Inquisition and reading references to the *Malleus Malefi Carum*, the Catholic church's manifesto on witches, but not knowing where to find this book which was originally published in the fifteenth



century. While browsing in a small suburban second hand bookshop, I asked the owner if he had any books on witchcraft, whereupon he turned to a shelf behind the counter and produced an old leather bound edition of the *Malleus Malefi Carum* which he would not allow me to remove from the shop; I set up a temporary desk in a quiet corner!

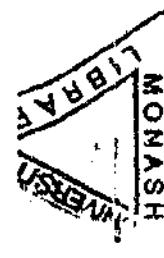
Another experience of synchronicity also involved the almost "magical" presence of relevant literature. During the initial engagement with the thesis, my brother-in-law, an architect with no background in psychology or women's studies, offered me several articles on creativity which I promptly stored in a cupboard unread, as I was grateful for his interest but unsure of their relevance. Eight years later as I was writing up the final discussion, delineating the elements which had emerged as important to the experience of conscious internal regulation of fertility, I found myself going to the cupboard for the articles, only to find the same elements described as integral to the experience of creativity. This was the creative synthesis! My brother-in-law had forgotten the incident entirely. This has happened repeatedly with written information and also with the development of my capacity to make sense of what I am reading; often a companion work has appeared, as if by chance, to clarify a concept or connection with which I had been struggling.

The synchronicity of inner and outer events was also evident in March, 1992, when the computer on which I was writing the literature review failed completely, reflecting the dreams (16.1.92; 26.3.92) and active imagination



(26.3.92) in which the archetypal feminine was appearing enraged. This period of disruption and unrest culminated with the dream (6.5.92) mentioned previously in which I, as the dreamer, declared that "I bow to the lady of the forest" and said, "No, I am not a Christian". The failure of the computer recurred synchronistically with a journal entry (28.7.92) in which I was exploring my of fear of collective sanctions for the subversive nature of the work. To use an everyday expression, these events are, of course, coincidences. They are, however, meaningful coincidences in the context of the thesis.

Another aspect of the relationship between inner and outer experience came present through using the focusing process (10.3.96) to attend to a bodily felt sense. In this case, the focusing was engaged in response to immersion with the material about the disenfranchisement of the feminine principle; the initial sense was of loss, which was experienced as a sensation of emptiness in the chest. Observing this sensation in a sustained way resulted in an image coming into awareness: "two golden eyes emerging from darkness, in a face even blacker. Just there, undeniably there. Not an optical effect of light and shadow. Here now, given form in paper, crayon, gold and black cloth". The understanding of this image was formed over time as the "golden eyes" continued to look out at me. It has been said that "when we look inward, the 'other' looks at us too, but with a strange faraway eye. The unconscious begins to reveal its secret play of fantasy" (von Franz cited in Hannah, 1981). When I look at matter, matter looks back at me.



This experience of matter looking back at me was consistent with the whole experience of encountering the archetypal feminine, and, in fact, also like the original experience of developing the practice of conscious internal regulation of fertility. There was the same quality of something being "just there" and also the tangible sense of "other" described by Von Franz. This is consistent with Merleau-Ponty's (1962; 1964; 1968) idea of the "body subject" and his description of witnessing within our participation in lived experience. In this experience, the distinction between inner and outer is altered, and matter is experienced as animate. It seems that the differentiation between the inner subjective world and the outer world of objective facts is an historical development (Gebser, 1991; Naydler, 1996), and only one way of experiencing "reality". The practice of focusing offers one way to experience the objective reality of the psyche which Jung has described so thoroughly. Perhaps it is as von Franz (1980) said, "All outer events in life are in a way only similes; they are only parables of an inner process, synchronistic symbolisations" (p. 259); or perhaps it is more like Merleau-Ponty's description of an ongoing interaction between perceiver and perceived, a mutual process of attraction, attention, and experience.

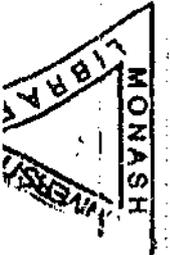
### Summary

This analysis of the personal material has explored the relevance of dreams, self-reflective writing, inner dialogue, focusing (and the resulting images), and other inner processes to the experience of researching and writing a thesis. The personal consequences of engaging the research are



also evident in this analysis. The central theme developed around the emergence of the two-million-year old woman, the archetypal feminine which profoundly informs the present work, and serves to locate it amongst the growing body of literature which is exploring the new mythologem of the feminine principle. This analysis was also engaged as an exploration of the subjective experience of doing research according to the heuristic model. In line with his, the personal material has been treated as data and analysed for meaning and relevance to the thesis.

The main body of the investigation is presented separately in the following chapters which explore methodological considerations and the gathering and sorting of data relevant to the investigation of the phenomenon of internal regulation of fertility. As previously mentioned, this separation of the personal data from the main body of the investigation is in line with the phenomenological practice of "bracketing" in which observations of process as it occurs are considered alongside but separately from the actual research, contributing to the texture and richness of the final creative synthesis of the material.

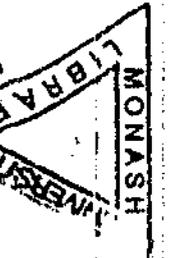


## CHAPTER SIX

Methodological considerations

The aim of methodology, then, is to describe and analyse ..... methods, throwing light on their limitations and resources, clarifying their presuppositions and consequences, relating their potentialities to the twilight zone at the frontiers of knowledge (Kaplan, 1964, p. 23).

As the present study focuses on the exploration of subjective experience, investigating a topic with its roots in mythology and eco-feminism, it obviously does not lend itself to a positivistic research design dealing with information about x number of people who have the experience, or a comparative analysis of the personality types of those who do and do not have the experience. Thus the focus is not prediction and control but rather a seeking of "knowledge that deepens and enlarges the understanding of human existence" (Polkinghorne, 1988). In considering this ambitious goal, it became obvious that the real art of methodology in this case seemed to lie in the ability to satisfy the requirements of sound investigative principles (form) while still remaining true to the nature of the topic of study (essence).



It seems that any respectable research paper in psychology requires attention to quantifying results. It is, however, important that the quantification makes sense and is not just a conventional gesture. It has been suggested that "..... before adopting the standard model we should at least ask ourselves: Do we really know the territory we are investigating? Or are we just mechanically applying a given research instrument?" (Whyte, 1984, p. 266). In the present study, it was always assumed that quantitative methodology would become meaningful only after comprehensive qualitative analysis of the material. Any categories of meaning derived from analysis of the in-depth interviews must relate truly to the subjective experiences of the subjects if quantitative analysis is to make sense. This led to a search for models of the meaningful combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The aim was, then, to find this relationship of form and essence in a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies which offer complementary approaches to data collection, analysis, and interpretation, while respecting the basic requirement of subjectivity demanded by the research topic.

#### The phenomenological approach

Phenomenological methodology was considered initially because it offers an approach to data analysis and interpretation which respects the central importance of subjective experience, even while providing data for further quantitative analysis. As outlined in Chapter 2, the phenomenological

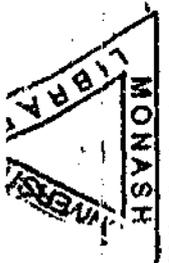


approach offers a challenge to the norm of objectivity which assumes that the subject and object of research can be separated from one another and that personal or grounded experiences are unscientific. This challenge is especially important in the present study as the tendency to equate quantification with objectivity has potential for the distortion of women's experiences (Pagelow, 1979; Cook & Fonow, 1990). This can be extended to any human experience which cannot be conceptualised according to measures that are easily quantifiable, and which cannot be understood from intellectual enquiry alone but must be regarded through the study of lived experience.

It has also been suggested that a story restricted to actions and things is incomplete and that it is the oral history which fills the gap (Anderson, Armitage, Jack, & Wittner, 1990). This awareness seems particularly relevant to an invisible, internal process such as the subjective experience of psychological contraception, where, in the absence of activities and objects, the participant's verbal report (either spoken or written) is the only information available. Closely related to phenomenological principles, qualitative methodology offers most to an investigation of this sort.

#### Qualitative methodology

Considering the lack of published literature specifically addressing the phenomenology of mind-body communication or processes, it is difficult to use any existing theoretical concepts or categories in data analysis. A qualitative approach allows for respondent derived categories, rather than ones imposed



from untested theory, or theory unrelated to the topic under study. This approach also allows the researcher to establish a relationship of trust and empathy (Stiles, 1993) with the respondents, thus increasing the likelihood of obtaining authentic responses, rather than socially desirable or stereotypical responses. This is especially relevant with women subjects for whom "the ability to value their own thought and experience is hindered by self doubt and hesitation when private experience seems at odds with cultural myths and values" (Anderson et al., 1990).

It is all too obvious from anecdotal reports as well as research on sex differences that women have more difficulty than men in considering themselves as authorities (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; West & Zimmerman, 1983); in expressing themselves in public so that others will listen (Piliavin, 1976; Sadker & Sadker, 1982; 1985); and in gaining respect of others for their minds and ideas (Hall & Sandler, cited in Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). It seemed especially important in investigating an area such as reproductive practices that these issues were considered in designing methodology. It has been convincingly argued that there is a bias towards rationalism and objectivity in most academic disciplines, methodologies, and theories (Belenky et al., 1986; Bernard, 1973; Gilligan, 1979; 1982; Harding & Hintikka, 1983; Langland & Gove, 1981), resulting in a devaluing of women's emotional, intuitive and intellectual ways of knowing. Qualitative methods of research are particularly suited to redress this imbalance.



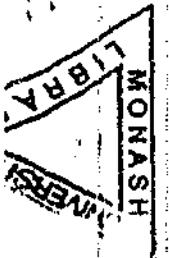
Under suitable conditions of enquiry, however, the reliability of women's descriptions of their own lives has been well established (Anderson et al., 1990; Brown & Harris, 1978), and the in-depth interview with a sympathetic interviewer provides the opportunity to explore subjective meaning and gather data which may otherwise remain hidden. Much can be learned about human behaviour through language, "the mode of access to meaning" (Warnke, 1987, p. 8). In a topic area such as the phenomenology of possible psycho-biological regulation of conception, the woman's subjective experience is the only starting point for inquiry.

In the field of psychology, subjective accounts have only recently received legitimate attention as research material. It may be that the Freudian emphasis on unconscious processes and the defence mechanisms of the ego have resulted in doubts that people's explanations for their behaviour or emotions can be trusted, so that reliance on experience as consciously perceived is seen to ignore the contribution of unconscious variables (Smith, 1950). It may also be that the traditional emphasis on quantitative, "objective" research methods has resulted in doubts about the reliability of the subjective dimension, and an unfamiliarity with qualitative research techniques. In the other social sciences, however, the last thirty years have seen a growth in the use and acceptability of the qualitative method, using unstructured forms of data collection, both interviewing and observation, and employing verbal descriptions and explanations rather than quantitative measurement.



A comprehensive analysis of the relative merits of qualitative and quantitative research methods is offered by Hammersley (1989), who has provided a detailed analysis of issues such as realism vs phenomenism, epistemology vs ontology, unity vs diversity of scientific methods, and general laws vs specific patterns. The basis of the decision to use qualitative methods at the initial stage of the present study rests in an investigation of these and related issues, in the light of the obviously subjective nature of the topic of study. There are now several well established domains (Jacob, 1987; 1988) of qualitative research approaches, human ethology (Blurton-Jones, 1972), ecological psychology (Barker, 1968; Lewin, 1936), holistic ethnography (Goodenough, 1971; Mead, 1970; Sanday, 1979), cognitive anthropology (Spradley, 1979), discourse analysis (Labov & Fanshel, 1977; Potter & Wetherell, 1987), conversational analysis (Frankel, 1984; 1990; Schegloff, 1987), symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1978), and hermeneutic investigation (Moustakas, 1990; Packer, 1985; Packer & Addison, 1989a; 1989b; Woolfolk, Sass, & Messer, 1988). Each of these assumes that systematic inquiry must occur in a natural setting rather than an artificially constrained one such as an experiment, and all use data collection techniques such as observation and in-depth interviewing.

Fundamental to this approach is the understanding that people's perspectives and subjective interpretations are not biases to be eliminated from the study, but are central to understanding their behaviour and their experience. It has been suggested that a qualitative approach is, in fact, a



different research paradigm rather than an alternative method (Westbrook, 1994). It took some time for the importance of this statement to impact on my own investigation of possible methodologies. The ontological and epistemological bases for this study are so grounded in subjectivity that it does, of course, contradict the prevailing positivistic assumptions in psychological research and, even while I had been stating this repeatedly, in a variety of ways, I had not fully realised the implications until I came to search for a methodology to meet the requirements of form and essence.

#### Quality control in qualitative research

It has been suggested that assessing the validity of interpretations based on qualitative data can involve the believability and usefulness of the research to people other than those participating in it (Stiles, 1993). The reliability and validity of qualitative research obviously need to be assessed according to different criteria from positivistic research. Stiles has proposed that both reliability and validity involve trustworthiness, the trustworthiness of data and the trustworthiness of interpretations or conclusions. He has offered several "good practice recommendations" which include

disclosure and explication of the investigator's personal orientation, context, and internal processes during the investigation, along with an intensive engagement with the material, iterative cycling between observation and interpretation, and grounding of the interpretations, along with intensive engagement with the material, iterative cycling between observation and interpretation, and grounding of the interpretations (p. 602).



These recommendations are met in the present thesis. The orientation of the literature review clearly states my theoretical and philosophical position through the exploration of the social, political and historical influences which I understand to impact on the phenomenon being investigated. Having this orientation explicit, whether or not it is shared, helps the reader put any interpretations in perspective. Autobiographic material including story, dreams, and journal entries relating to my experiences with internal regulation of fertility and to my engagement with the research itself are included, with reference to the developmental stages of the thesis. It has been proposed that the processes of self-examination, significant personal learning, and change do need to be shared with readers "as they constitute a part of the meaning of the study's observations and interpretations" (Stiles, 1993, p. 604; Lincoln & Guba, 1990).

The whole process of the current research obviously involved an intensive engagement with the material in the way recommended by Stiles. The interviews for data collection were conducted over a three year period, allowing time for iterative cycling between observation and interpretation. This time frame was due mainly to the difficulty of locating suitable participants for this study, but also served to deepen the meaning of the material for both the researcher and the participants. An important procedure for grounding the interpretations involves making the interview data available for inspection (Paget, 1983; Waitzkin, 1990); in the present case, passages from the transcripts are included in the text and the entire interviews are available in



Appendices B and D, so that "confirmability" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) can come from content as well as method.

### Computing for qualitative data

Developments in computing for qualitative data analysis during the last twenty years have led to detailed reports of approaches to the coding and retrieval of unstructured data (Drass, 1980; Gillespie, 1986; Podolevsky & McCarthy, 1983). There is, however, a further requirement in working with data in a relatively unexplored area, that of creating theory rather than testing existing theory. More recent developments in qualitative data analysis (Richards & Richards, 1987; 1991) make it possible to design or evolve indexing structures involving the identifying of general categories and the more specific categories that belong under them, which can then be located using computational techniques rather than text-search techniques. Using this analysis program, the indexing system is an independent structure, allowing for the shifting, deleting, and combining of indexing categories in the process of theory building. The separation of documentary and index data also ensures the integrity of documentary data. Using this program, the interview transcripts are coded according to theoretical indexing categories, and analysed for themes. This approach allows the flexibility that is at the basis of "grounded theorising" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), whereby theory building and data collection are dialectically linked.

Describing and analysing individual responses in small case studies



such as the present one, cannot, of course, transcend the particular according to traditional methodological standards. In an area such as the one under study, responses that do appear repeatedly are taken to offer support for the existence of a phenomenon, and to indicate the possibility of some common elements in the experience and structure of this. While the qualitative method can indicate the presence of a phenomenon in the present study, it does not, however, objectively establish whether this reflects a cosmology of reproduction with no direct biological connections (a belief system that, for example, "explains" the infertility of one or both partners), or does actually reflect a psycho-biological process of birth control. This approach can, however, indicate that something of interest is happening for these women; something which may have profound implications for the understanding of both contraception and fertility, and the understanding of psycho-biological processes more generally.

#### Methodology: A journey towards understanding

The unfolding process of attempting to achieve the desired synthesis of essence and form in the methodological approach has formed a significant part of this study and, therefore, the personal and pragmatic considerations and constraints in developing the methodology are documented in the following paragraphs as an intrinsic part of the thesis.

The topic of study has provided an opportunity to record the difficulties of finding a suitable methodological approach to exploring subjective



experience. What became obvious in searching through available methodological models is that most of them are designed to measure specific events determined on their theoretical foundation. For example, cognitive mapping procedures are based in cognitive theory which addresses the measurement of "beliefs", "values", or "schemas", while Kelly's (1955) personal construct theory addresses the measure of "constructs". Inevitably the question arose: what exactly do I want to measure? What does "subjective experience" mean? In not prescribing what is being measured with definitions of cognitive processing or construing, the task becomes more difficult but potentially more authentically subjective, more truly phenomenological. The philosophical, theoretical, and practical issues involved in this are discussed in more detail in subsequent paragraphs which document the specific approaches considered and rejected.

#### What am I measuring?

Initial investigation led to Kelly's (1955) Role Construct Repertory Test, the basic principles of which allow for the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, combining phenomenological approaches with more conventional methodology. The criticism of a possible lack of depth in the bipolar interpretation of constructs led to the understanding that investigating the intra-psyche processes involved in psycho-biological processes may involve a different kind of metaphor. This is not, however, a simple thing to find, as the following paragraphs will demonstrate.



It does make sense to define meaning in terms of bi-polar constructs when we consider that meaning always exists in a context and that it can be the personally significant similarities and differences between things which lends personal meaning. Cybernetic models (Bateson, 1972) which represent meaning in various dynamic forms do, however, support the idea that bipolarity does not adequately represent the complexity of the principles or elements underlying cognition or construing. Following the cybernetic models explored by Bateson (1972), Ellis (1981) argued that it is *form*, described as structural and functional patterns, that needs to be the foundation of social science research. Ellis proposed six principles which enter into this conceptualisation of form: difference, relationship, pattern, sequence, context, and time. The concept of difference is seen as the defining characteristic of form; it is the difference between a thing and some thing else that defines and clarifies the thing. This is consistent with Kelly's (1955) formulation of bi-polar constructs, as is the concept of relationship, "a connective principle ..... a rule which instructs, clarifies, and explains how two things stand toward one another" (Ellis, 1981, p. 220). Bateson (1972), in fact, called relationships the "primary ordering principles", a phrase reminiscent of Kelly.

The cybernetic model, however, develops the idea of relationships into patterns, or sets of relationships. While the importance of patterns or rules is well understood in personality research, these have most often been explored as generative mechanisms rather than connective principles. That is, patterns or rules have been regarded as the constructs (or beliefs, values etc.) which



generate behaviour, rather than as processes which may underlie the constructs. While this may seem to be merely a semantic difference, it does have relevance for the current research; there is a distinction between exploring values, perceptions, and beliefs which contribute to behaviours and exploring the underlying intra-psychic processes which contribute to the values, perceptions, and beliefs (and, therefore, behaviours). This may, in fact, have been a distinction that Kelly was trying to make, albeit somewhat obscurely.

Bateson (1972; 1978) and those following and developing his ideas also made this distinction, calling mind "the pattern which connects". In line with this, Ellis's (1981) concept of sequences comes into play. It seems that a research strategy which hopes to determine underlying intra-psychic processes must consider a matrix of interacting elements including differences, relationships, patterns, and sequences (predictable movements from one event to another). All of this must also be considered within the context (inner and outer) in which an event occurs, and, of course, the relative timing of the event. The obvious difficulty with this is that while events are quantitative, the underlying processes are not; as Bateson (1981) wrote, "the total system is a sort of a ladder, interlocking settings which are calibrations, which are qualitative, discontinuous, fixed, structural sort of things" (p. 43).

The search for suitable methodology also led to a consideration of the cognitive mapping protocol (Axelrod, 1976) which initially seemed to offer an



interlocking, multi-dimensional perspective. In its original form, this procedure is based on the idea of a cognitive map as a conceptualisation of beliefs about a particular area of interest, and allows for a visual representation of network diagrams of a person's underlying standings and beliefs. The theoretical background for cognitive mapping is, however, clearly based in cognitive theory which relates to areas such as learning, memory, and perception. Using the more recent language of cognitive modelling, cognitive mapping explains cognition through abstract models consisting of conceptual structures for representing knowledge and sets of processes which operate on those structures (Aitkenhead & Slack, 1985).

The element of personal meaning has traditionally entered cognitive theory through the study of beliefs and values. It does, however, still seem that there is an inevitable reduction of these concepts to information processing models which attempt to describe what values and beliefs do rather than what they are. For example, values have been defined as general transcendental beliefs that serve as standards against which thoughts or actions may be evaluated (Rokeach, 1973), or as factors directing perception and behaviour through selective perception (Eden, Jones, & Sims, 1983). This idea that attitudes, beliefs, and values are inadequate explanatory elements of mind is not new. Symbolic interactionism, for example, refers instead to "perspectives", the changing and dynamic guides to interpretation and then to action. In this understanding, "perspectives" are changeable and not necessarily consistent in any one person (Charon, 1979). The idea offered



here is that individuals are dynamic, changing actors, always in process. In this sense, cognitive definitions of the elements of personal meaning reveal the behavioural origins of cognitive theory (a value is defined by the effect it has), rather than offering a suitably complex description of the origins and influences of personal meaning.

Biological scientist, Gerald Edelman (1987; 1989; 1992) has offered such a complex description in his Theory of Neuronal Group Selection (TNGS). The basis of TNGS is the description of "mind" as the selective coordination of complex patterns of interconnections between neuronal groups, forming a dynamic loop that sounds very much like Bateson's "interlocking settings". Edelman (1992) argued against the widespread acceptance of the underlying assumptions of a cognitive model of human thought, reasoning, meaning, and of their relationship to perception; "the error has been to attribute the characteristics of human mental constructions (such as logic and mathematics) to human reasoning and to the macroscopic world in which we live" (Edelman, 1992, p. 228). Consistent with the phenomenological approach, Edelman (1992) proposed that the functionalist, computational view of the mind which is highly formal and disembodied is based on principles which ignore how the mind actually reveals itself in human beings with bodies. The same principles of objectivism and functionalism which seem sensible in classical chemistry, physics, and parts of biology, are far from sensible when applied to the phenomenology of human processes. Edelman (1987; 1989; 1992) argued extensively that the structure, function,



and diversity of the nervous system, as well as its evolution and development, are incompatible with the functionalist view.

This is consistent with the idea of "linking" proposed by psychoanalytic theorist, Bion (1962; 1963; 1967), and developed further by Braun (1988) who described four aspects of experience: behaviour, affect, sensation, and knowledge. In this understanding,

the normally integrated components of experience include both somatic and mental elements, affects and sensations from the body, thoughts, images and cognitive mechanisms in the mind as well as a mysterious "meaning" dimension which has to do with whether something can be integrated as a part of one's personal identity and narrative history (Kalsched, 1998, p. 37).

If the methodology is to encompass these aspects of experience, then it must move beyond models informed by cognitive theory.

So, in line with this, an attempt was made to adapt the cognitive mapping model to be consistent with a more complex view of experience. This involves attention to what Gregory Bateson (1978) calls the fundamental epistemological error of attempting to understand human processes according to simple causal, mechanistic models. Bateson (1978, p. 409) suggested that the "internal interdependencies" of the total "systematically cybernetically organised self-corrective system" of a human organism are very poorly understood. What he was describing is a tendency for human observation to "pull out, from the total mind, sequences which do not have the loop structure



which is characteristic of the whole systemic structure" (p. 410).

Once again, Edelman (1992) has offered assistance with his questioning of the assumption that perception and memory work by passively acquiring codes in the same sense that a computer receives data. He suggested that the brain takes samplings of the world so as to create uniquely personal and dynamic maps in the brain, and that every perception is an act of creation rather than a fixed representation. In line with this understanding, I considered adapting the cognitive mapping protocol to produce "intra-psychic models". If by "cognitive", I mean "thought processes", implying the rational function of mind, then "intra-psychic" processes can be taken to imply the non-rational as well as rational functions, allowing for "mind" to be more than "brain". It follows that this intra-psychic territory cannot be mapped in the sense that mapping usually involves relatively fixed and static topography; intra-psychic models would have to be more like flow charts of works in progress.

These theoretical explorations of what exactly was being measured were leading towards a methodology which offers strategies for eliciting, mapping, and analysing the individual and dynamic nature of underlying processes of intra-psychic experience. Theoretically this would have to be represented by a three dimensional "map" of interacting networks, a multi-dimensional model which would require that results of a study such as this are presented in a form which does justice to the complexity of interacting



networks, rather than being reduced down to component parts.

The theoretical considerations of the preceding section developed over time and in response to each stage of data gathering and analysis. The next section outlines the relationship between the actual data and the development of the methodology.

#### The development of the methodology

The first stage of gathering interview data and analysing the verbatim transcripts via qualitative analysis of theoretical and response derived categories of meaning met the basic methodological requirements of exploring personal meaning in relation to a subjective experience. This approach did not, however, meet the methodological requirement for an analysis which explores depth, complexity, and the cybernetic "loop" structure of underlying intra-psychic processes. At this stage, it became obvious that there exists a gap between the description of multi-dimensional models of intra-psychic or mental processes and the methodology for tracking and describing these processes. Available methodology has a flattening effect, consistently reducing multi-dimensional events to two-dimensional categories. It seems that the Cartesian model meets the researcher at every turn, defying attempts to represent the depth and complexity, the "juiciness" of intra-psychic functioning. The challenge seemed to be how to fill out the "flat" categories of meaning to give some (hopefully accurate) picture of the underlying intra-psychic processes involved in the subjective experience of the participants.



Initially the solution seemed to rest with gathering more and "better" information. A search for alternative methodological approaches followed. Further questions just offer further responses; more elaborate or more "clever" questioning/data gathering techniques just produce more information.

The answer, then, seemed to lie in how the information was perceived by the researcher. When the response categories from the first stage of analysis were listed as tables of information, the "flatness" of the information was glaringly obvious. How else to look at the information? If each response category is seen as a "loop", in Bateson's (1981) terminology, and organised according to Ellis's (1981) principles of form, then some depth and complexity may appear. For example, the response category of "mind control" which was determined by reference in the interview to "want", "decision", "mind", "conscious", "control", "choose", and related terms used in context, can be represented in terms of percentage finds in the transcript. It is not surprising, given the topic under study, that this category was found for all participants. What may be interesting is that the relative frequency (proportion of the whole interview) of this response differs in each interview: 22%, 30%, 11%, 7.4%, 7%. What might this mean? How could this meaning be discovered?

The first issue concerns whether the language analysis was specific enough in deriving this category from the words used in the interview. The double process of theory and text derived categories does, however, tend to ensure that reference to a particular category is not overlooked, even when it

is expressed in very idiosyncratic terms (the categories are first found by a text search according to predetermined constructs, then the text is searched a second time for any words or phrases which may refer to an existing category, or suggest a new one).

What, then, does it mean for one person to refer to "mind control" 22% of the interview (a higher proportion of the content than any other category) while another person refers to "mind control" 7% of the interview, with spiritual belief (determined by reference to "god", "Goddess", "deity", "worship", "sacred", "spirit" and related terms used in context) referred to 17% of the interview. How can this be represented to elaborate on the possible meaning? If "mind control" were, for example, taken as one "loop" in the underlying structure of the subjective phenomenon under study, then it could be represented in terms of various principles including difference, relationship, pattern, sequence, context, and time (Ellis, 1981). This approach begins, theoretically, to offer some depth and complexity to the analysis. The next question is whether there is enough information in the original interview transcript to determine the relevance of these principles to the category. For example, difference can be determined by the differences between one thing and another which define and clarify the thing; so, the category of "mind control" differs from the category of "spirituality" in terms of the words and phrases used for each category. Yet, this is, to some extent, tautological. This is the point at which the Repertory Grid (Kelly, 1955) was considered (and rejected) to determine the underlying constructs which describe the



differences between "mind control" and "spirituality" for each participant. This model could have been used by considering successive combinations of the categories until all had been examined in this way, revealing underlying constructs. The underlying constructs could then have been represented as vectors of meaning.

The important question was, however, whether anything would be gained with this exercise. Would it truly reveal underlying intra-psychic processes or do the constructs derived from an analysis of bi-polar difference reduce the information available? Does it reveal more or less or, perhaps, just different information? Used in the original form, the Repertory Grid analysis would lead further away from the original transcripts, even while these would still be accessible for reference. The question remained: is there a meaningful way of determining difference in relation to the categories of meaning which emerged from the language analysis?

Consideration was then given to relationship, "a connective principle ..... a rule which instructs, clarifies, and explains how two things stand toward one another" (Ellis, 1981, p. 220). Information about this would allow the elements to be positioned in relation to each other. This is where the application of quantitative analysis was considered, to determine relationship; an analysis of correlation, for example, or the more sophisticated correlational analysis of multidimensional scaling (Brown & Sime, 1982). Yet, despite developments which acknowledge the importance of personal meaning

LIBRARY  
MONSIEUR  
H.S. YOUNG

(Forgas, 1979), this remains a constructed, assumed relationship, derived from representing the degree of similarity amongst items in terms of Euclidean geometry. Does a relationship truly exist for a participant between, for example, "mind control" and "spirituality". A quantitative analysis will not answer this for the individual; it offers a picture of statistical relationship, not truly a "connective principle" consistent with the phenomenological orientation of the study.

These concerns led to an investigation of the Self-Q technique (Bougon, 1983), which offers a method for mapping "concept-structures", the approximations to the unattainable knowledge of the underlying principles of perception, conceptualisation, and behaviour. In the Self-Q technique, the information is generated by the participants rather than the researcher. In the complete form of the technique, participants are requested to ask themselves specific questions about a particular domain. The objective is not for the participant to answer the questions but for the researcher to identify particular concepts that are revealed by the self questioning to be relevant to the participant (arguably similar to information revealed in an unstructured, sympathetic interview). Prior to the second interview, the researcher writes on a card each concept that was identified in the first interview. The participant then subdivides the concepts and suggests concepts that are missing. The third interview is used to generate relations between the concepts. Each concept is presented on a separate page and the participants asked to consider the relationships between that concept and all the other concepts in

LIBRARY  
MONASH  
UNIVERSITY

terms of strength of relationship and direction of influence. The final interview involves the researcher presenting the participant with the graphical map as a final check on validity. In the Self-Q model, elements or categories are considered different if they affect each other. A person may believe that two or more elements mean something similar, but if an element affects another element, they are considered to be two distinct elements. Bougon (1983) has suggested that an exhaustive cognitive map involves all possible types of relations occurring in patterns of concepts; contiguity, proximity, continuity, resemblance, implication, causality, and their derivative verbs, so that cognitive maps offer a study of meaning as a relational phenomenon. In this sense, the principle of pattern suggested by Ellis (1981) seems to be included in the cognitive mapping model. This model certainly seemed to offer a level of ongoing subjectivity which was consistent with the methodological aims of the present study. The concern, however, was that the focus of this approach, consistent with its background in cognitive theory, was, once again, on the relationship between schemas, concept-structures and behaviour.

At this stage, the search for an appropriate methodology led to a consideration of Brown's (1980; 1988; 1989; 1993; 1994; 1995; 1996) work regarding Stephenson's (1953) Q-methodology. These writers have claimed that Q-methodology has a respect for subjectivity and for the changeability of subjective experience, without reducing the available information. Q-methodology was invented in 1936 by British physicist-psychologist William Stephenson (1953) who was interested in finding ways to reveal the



subjectivity involved in any situation. It has been claimed that this approach offers strengths from both qualitative and quantitative research traditions (Dennis & Goldberg, 1996). The final decision to adopt this methodological approach was informed by the previous considerations outlined in this chapter. While there was no direct adaptation of the approaches considered along the way, the questions of what exactly was being measured and how exactly this needed to be done had been clarified through the process of evaluating the different approaches. What Q-methodology offers is constant close reference to the original words of the participants, even while also allowing for a ranking and quantifying process that actually adds to the available information rather than reducing it. It is, therefore, the words of women involved in the study which provide the basis for ongoing analysis.

The data which is used in this approach is derived from the original interview transcripts in the form of statements women have made about their experience of birth control. The statements selected for use in the study are representative of the domain being studied. A new group of participants rank-orders the selected statements from agree to disagree, or any appropriate pair of statements. An important distinction, often made by enthusiasts of Q-methodology, is that the participants themselves are doing the measuring rather than the researcher coding a questionnaire. What is being measured is, therefore, the subjective response of the participant to the statement rather than a trait or characteristic. The results are factor-analysed, and the resulting factors are defined according to the original statements. The original interview

LIBRARY  
MONASH  
UNIVERSITY

data, therefore, remains an integral part of the analysis, so that even while the statements are subsumed into the factors, they remain clearly visible. As Brown (1996) has pointed out, "despite its mathematical substructure, Q's purpose is to reveal subjective structures, attitudes, and perspectives from the standpoint of the person or persons being observed" (p. 3).

A point Stephenson made repeatedly was that the importance of Q-methodology does not rest in some unusual application of factor analysis but in what is being measured; it is the participant's *relationship* with the statements that is being measured. The cybernetic model defines patterns as sets of relationships; in Q-methodology, the factors emerging from each person's relationship with the statements (via the ranking) indicate sets of relationships, and linking these back to the original statements allows for observation of possible patterns. These patterns are not, therefore, inherent in the statements themselves, but emerge via the participant's ranking of statements. It is important to note that "the ranking involved in Q-sorting is not aimed at determining a value hierarchy for all time and independent of context; rather it is a procedure designed to reveal values as they are expressed in contexts" (Brown, 1994). This is consistent with the aim of the present study to investigate women's subjective experience of birth control.

The combination of language analysis and Q-methodology does, therefore, seem to provide the approach most consistent with the premises of this study. The overall process of finding a methodology that truly honoured



these principles was an integral part of the project. The time spent considering several different forms and finding them unsuited to the task was profoundly instructive in developing an understanding of the complexity of attempting to measure phenomena that are not easily observable, and the difficulty of truly being able to claim that it is, indeed, these elusive phenomena of subjective experience that are being measured. Even with allowing for the cybernetic principles of Bateson's recursive nature of mind, the results will inevitably lack the movement implied in a cybernetic model; dynamic processes can only be represented as relatively static combinations despite the attempts to retain the interactive nature of the intra-psychic elements. Perhaps some of the necessary movement can be incorporated by moving back and forth from the original words of the participants to the results of the analysis, thereby interpreting meaning recursively.



CHAPTER SEVEN  
Gathering and sorting

The investigation evolved into three stages of data gathering, analysis, and review. Each stage informed the next and the process of this development is outlined in the sections below. While the written description of this process appears relatively linear, the development of the methodological understandings described in Chapter 6 occurred concurrently with the gathering and sorting of data. This is consistent with the idea of emergent design described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), in which the direction of the enquiry is determined by the data rather than by predetermined ideas. The research design did, therefore, develop and change in response to the information emerging from gathering and sorting the data, and with my understanding of the requirements. This is also in line with the ideas of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) which is based on deductive analysis so that the theory follows the data rather than preceding it. While I obviously did begin this investigation with some ideas based on personal experience and extensive reading, I have also been



informed by the information which actually emerged.

The three stages of gathering and sorting the data are represented in Figure 2.

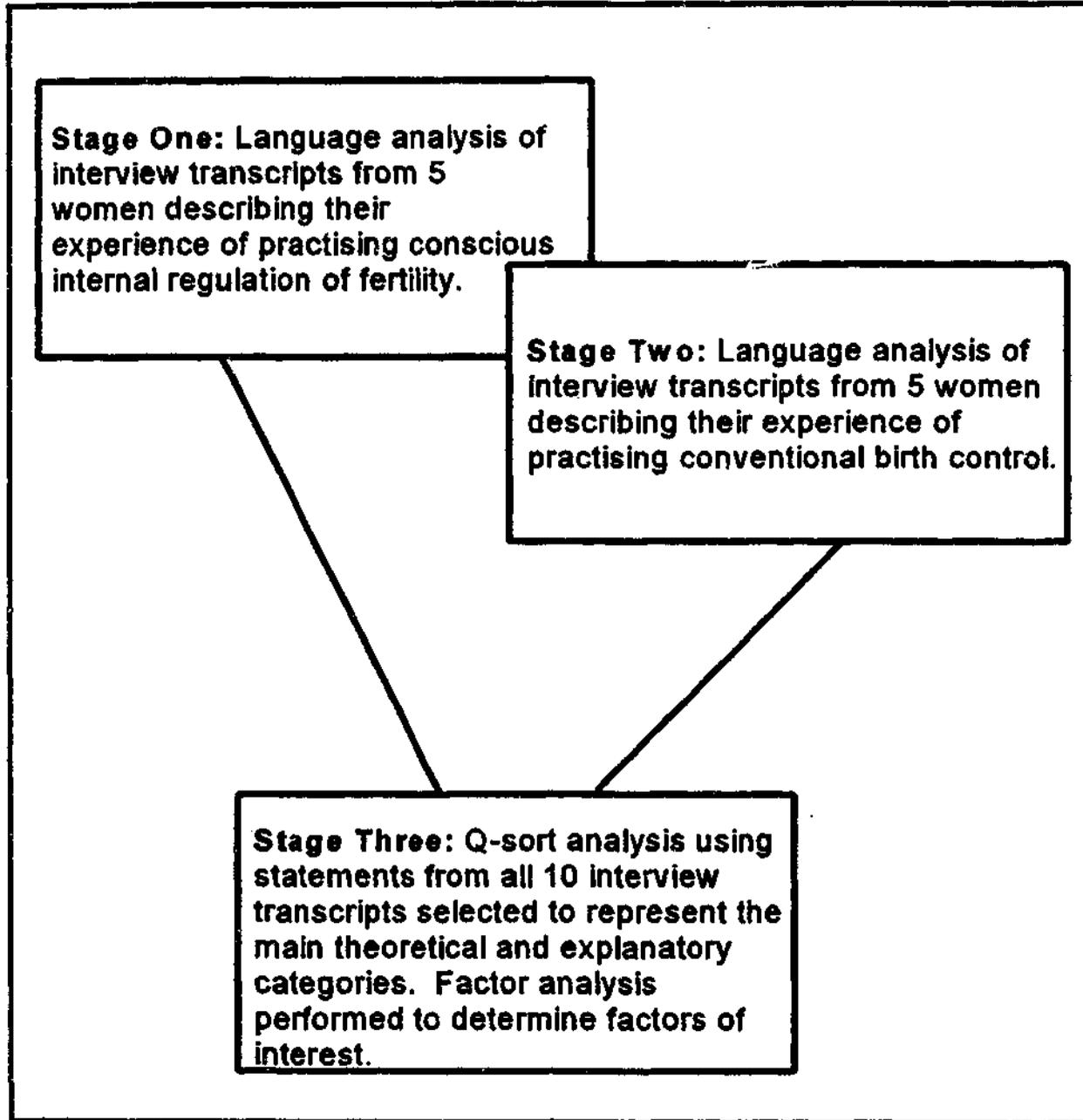


Figure 2. The three stages of analysis.

### Summary of the gathering and sorting process

The first stage was based on interviews with five women describing their subjective experience of practising a psychobiological method of birth control. Qualitative language analysis of interview transcripts was used to determine categories of meaning from the interviews, based on both theoretical understandings and response derived categories. While this analysis was successful in identifying elements of the experience of conscious internal regulation of fertility, it also revealed the need to locate the findings contextually in birth control practices more generally. To this end, the second stage involved interviews with five women practising conventional methods of birth control. Language analysis of interview transcripts involved response derived categories to identify elements of the experience of conventional birth control practices. Methodological considerations (described in Chapter 6) determined that a simple comparison of the differences between the two samples would not contribute any further to the understanding the subjective experience of fertility management. Stage 3 was designed to identify the factors related to women's subjective experience of birth control practices generally. Fifty statements derived from the ten interview transcripts were used in a Q-sort analysis which was completed by thirty women. The statements were subsumed into five factors which formed the basis for explaining variations in the experience of fertility management. The method, procedure, and findings of each stage of the analysis are presented in full, in the sequence in which they occurred.



Stage OneResearch Questions

- What is the subjective experience of a woman practising a psycho-biological method of birth control?
- What is the woman's understanding of her experience?
- Do these subjective reports suggest theoretical explanations of the phenomenon?

Participants

I began the search for participants by approaching health practitioners in women's clinics, childbirth education, and family planning clinics. Criteria for inclusion were women who:

- claimed to practice (or have practised) internal (psycho-biological) regulation of conception for a period of at least one year with no recourse to other forms of birth control;
- were aged between 20 and 55;
- had at least one full-term pregnancy and live birth;
- during the time of practising internal regulation of fertility had regular sexual relations with a man believed to be fertile (for the purposes of this study, "regular" meant approximately weekly with no consistent or deliberate abstinence during fertile times of the reproductive cycle) for at least a period of one year without conceiving;
- had no reason to believe they were not fertile.



Initial contact with participants was made by telephone to establish suitability for inclusion in the study. To select the five participants, telephone contact was made with an additional 54 women who considered themselves eligible for the study but who did not meet one or more of the selection criteria. The amount of anecdotal information (not recorded) received during this selection process warrants a study in its own right, with many women reporting retrospective, previously unreflected experiences of the phenomenon of psycho-biological birth control. What this demonstrated is that there are many women who think they might be doing "something" invisible and unusual to regulate fertility, but cannot describe a consistent, deliberate practice. Anecdotal reports included stories of failing to conceive during times of frequent unprotected sex without understanding how this happened, but knowing that "something" was at work to prevent unwanted pregnancy. These verbatim reports were the first indication that the research design was too narrow; women other than those meeting the initial criteria had a story to tell about internal regulation of fertility.

While the initial number of interviews was small by quantitative standards, this is not necessarily considered small by qualitative standards. It can be argued that qualitative research which is designed to investigate subjective experience need only gather interview data until subjects begin to repeat what has been said previously, without adding anything new (Kvale, 1994). Similarly, the interview length can also be determined by how long it



takes for a subject to begin repeating information rather than adding new information. Criteria of information redundancy do, therefore, support relatively small numbers of participants, and data collection is deemed sufficiently complete when new participants no longer contribute new categories of information (McIntosh, 1994). There is considerable scope in the present study for intensive study of a relatively small number of subjects.

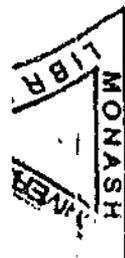
### Procedure

#### Initial contact with subjects

Women whose names were obtained through personal contact with health professionals in various fields were approached by telephone contact to determine their suitability for inclusion in the study and, when appropriate, to arrange a time for an in-depth interview about their experience of birth control. These women had indicated that they practised a method of birth control involving "mental" (psycho-biological) regulation of conception. Preliminary inquiries were made about their method of birth control to ensure that it met the requirements for the study. All participation was voluntary.

#### Interviews

In line with qualitative methodology, the data for the present study was collected through in-depth interviews with women, conducted at a place of their choice, with only the interviewer and subject present. It is well recognised that the level of sophistication of research questions must be matched by the level of interview questions (Anderson et al., 1990), and, therefore, the



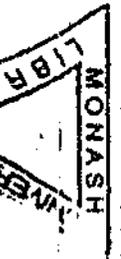
interview questions were designed to encourage women to talk about their experiences, feelings, thoughts, and understandings of birth control; women were encouraged to tell their own stories, and to speak in their own terms. In line with the general interview guide suggested by Patton (1980) participants were initially asked to talk generally about their method of birth control, and then asked specifically about what led them to use this method and their understanding of how it works. Questions were asked to clarify subjective meaning and the meaning of particular words or statements; for example, "Can you tell me more about what that means to you?", "How exactly do you understand that happens?". This is consistent with the suggestion that "What questions often call forth stories, which may be more subtle than theories ..... (while) 'why' questions often elicit half-baked theories or post hoc justifications" (Stiles, 1993, p. 607).

Before each interview the participant was offered a brief description of the project and any questions were answered. Interviews were recorded, with participant's permission, on a portable tape recorder. Verbatim transcripts were made of each interview (Appendix B). Permission was obtained to use direct quotes in the final report.

#### First stage of sorting

#### Coding of Interviews

Analysing language for subjective responses requires using categories



developed from the theoretical background to the topic. In the present study, the transcripts were analysed using categories based on the broad categories of psychology, mythology, anthropology, and biology, as explored in the preceding chapters. The transcripts of each interview were, therefore, coded according to initial indexing categories derived from the theoretical perspectives discussed in previous chapters.

For each category, sub-categories were formed in line with the theoretical and conceptual background to the phenomenon under study. In the category of psychology, for example, the sub-category of "mind control" was included as a core concept in mind-body communication; the words or phrases which were considered to indicate a reference to mind control were derived from common English usage; for example, the words "control", "decision", and "choose", when used in relation to conscious control of conception, were taken to indicate the category of mind control.

In the first stage of the analysis, these sub-categories were located in the transcripts using the Nudist qualitative analysis program (Richards & Richards, 1987) to search for the following concepts and logically related words and phrases in the text. Table 1 shows each category with the sub-categories and the words or phrases used to locate the category in the text.



Table 1

Categories and Sub-categories in Initial Text Search

## Category = Psychology:

Sub-category = mind control (text searched for references to "want", "decision", "mind", "conscious", "control", "choose", and related terms when used in the context of control of conception).

Sub-category = intra-psychic processes (text searched for references to "feminine", "masculine", "archetype", "energy", "principles", and related terms when used in the context of an intra-psychic experience relating to conception or contraception).

## Category = Mythology:

Sub-category = ancient knowledge (text searched for references to "rites", "rituals", "wisdom", "secret", and "mysteries").

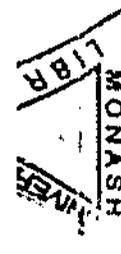
Sub-category = religion, spirituality (text searched for reference to "god", "goddess", "deity", "worship", "sacred", "spirit", and related terms when used in the context of a higher power or deity who is seen to be involved in the process of conception)

## Category = Anthropology:

Sub-category = learned techniques (text searched for references to "practices", "habits", "customs" and related terms when used in the context of contraception).

## Category = Biology:

Sub-category = control of body processes (text searched for references to "body", "womb", "ovary", "uterus", "sperm", "egg", "fertilisation", "implantation", and related terms when used in the context of conscious control of body processes).



The analysis program allowed for the revision and reworking of these categories in response to the data. The next stage of analysis involved a manual search for additional references in the text, so that the final sub-categories presented in Table 2 were both theoretically and textually based. There were, therefore, two distinct stages in the content analysis of the interviews: the initial indexing of the text according to categories derived from theory, and then a reworking of these categories in response to the actual data. Final retrievals of text from each interview were made for each category on the basis of the references listed in Table 2 for each sub-category. The percentages refer to the proportion of the whole interview (for subjects A through E) in which references were made to the sub-category under study.

Table 2  
Percentage of Final Retrievals of Words and Phrases from the Text for each Category and Sub-Category

Category	Sub-category	Percentage Retrievals				
		A	B	C	D	E
Psychology:	Mind Control (contains references in the interviews to "want", "decision", "mind", "conscious", "responsible", "control", "allow", and "choose" when used in the context of control of conception)	22	30	11	7.4	7
	Intra-psychic Processes/Archetypal (contains references to "feminine", "inner presence", and "principle" when used in the context of an intra-psychic experience relating to conception or contraception)	0	22	0	0	0
	Intra-psychic Processes/Unconscious (contains references to "unconscious", "unaware", "unknown", "unclear", and "surprising" when used in the context of a lack of conscious understanding of the process of contraception)	8.3	0	6.4	3.9	0

LIBRARY  
 MONASH  
 UNIVERSITY

Table 2 continued  
Percentage of Final Retrievals of Words and Phrases from the Text for Each Category and Sub-Category

Category	Sub-category	Percentage retrieval				
		A	B	C	D	E
<b>Psychology: Intra-psychic Processes/Conscious</b>	<b>Inner Processes</b> (contains references to "inner", "thought", "awareness", "conscious", "reflection", "perception", "imagination" used in the context of conscious contraception)	2.8	8	11	12	3.5
	<b>Creative Work</b> (contains references to "work in the world", "responsibility", and "creativity" used in the context of an alternative to conception and pregnancy)	0	4.6	0	4.3	3.5
	<b>Needs</b> (contains references to "needs" and "wants" used in the context of motivations for conceiving or not conceiving)	0	5.7	4.6	0	0
	<b>Feelings</b> (contains references to specific feeling states used in the context of decisions to conceive or not conceive)	0	2.3	3.5	0	0
<b>Mythology: Spiritual Belief</b> (contains references to "god", "goddess", "spirit", "soul", "prayer", "being", "plane", "incarnate", and "worship" used in the context of a higher power or deity who is seen to be involved in the process of conception)	11	4.6	1.2	17	0	
<b>Anthropology: Customs of Other Cultures</b> (contains references to "ancestors", and "tribal customs" in relation to contraception):	11	0	0	0	0	

LIBRARY  
 MONASH  
 HSYANOW

Table 2 continued  
Percentage of Final Retrievals of Words and Phrases from the Text for Each Category and Sub-Category

Category	Sub-category	Percentage				
Biology:	<b>Body Processes/Control</b> (contains references to physical descriptions of body processes such as "implantation", "fertilisation", and of biological names such as "sperm" or "egg", used in the context of conscious control of body processes):	A	B	C	D	E
		0	11	2.9	0	8.8
	<b>Body Processes/Knowledge</b> (contains references to descriptions of body processes such as the menstrual cycle and signs of fertility, showing an understanding of the physiology of conception, and used in the context of contraception):	A	B	C	D	E
		5.6	9.2	8.1	5.6	7
	<b>Body Processes/Problems with Other Forms of Contraception</b> (contains references to dissatisfaction with conventional contraceptive methods used in the context of motivation to develop alternative approaches to birth control):	A	B	C	D	E
		8.3	17	0	1.3	0
	<b>Body Processes/Quality of Sex</b> (contains references to sexual intercourse as this relates to conscious contraception):	A	B	C	D	E
		0	0	0	4.3	1.8

This final schema resulted from the content analysis of each subject's interview transcript (Appendix C). For example, "mind control" was a coded category under the general category of psychology and was indexed according to textual references such as "want", "decision", "mind", "conscious", "responsible", "control", "allow", and "choose", when these were used in the context of conscious mental (internal) control of conception. This resulted in a broader category with more textual references than the initial theory based categories.

Table 3 offers a verbatim extract as an example of each category of meaning.

Table 3  
Coding for Interview Data: Text Examples of Each Theme

Category	Extract
<p><b>Mind Control</b> Conscious control of body processes</p>	<p>We choose not to incarnate any more souls and this is.....a thought perception rather than physical.</p>
<p><b>Archetypal Processes</b> The feminine principle reported as transpersonal psychic content</p>	<p>It was like an internal dialogue with someone or something much bigger and more powerful than myself who was somehow responsible for things like conception and pregnancy and birth and maybe even death. She seemed to demand procreation from me (and other women), and it was as if my relationship with her had to change in order not to conceive. Sometimes this was frightening, awesome; at other times it was just what was happening.</p>
<p><b>Unconscious Processes</b> Intrapsychic events occurring out of conscious awareness</p>	<p>I met my husband at 23 and had been sexually active since 18. In that time I did not have any consciousness about this, but through this time I was quite sexually active with a number of sexual partners and never in that time practise any form of contraception apart from a vague awareness of the rhythm method. But only vaguely. I was foolish; the only awareness was that I did not want children, but there was no practice or awareness. I did not conceive.</p>
<p><b>Creative Work</b> Work as an alternative to conception</p>	<p>It also seems that there has been a trade-off or agreement for me to use my energies in other ways other than making babies. Like writing and studying and doing things that seem useful in the world. Maybe that's imagination, although it seems very real at the time.</p>

LIBR  
MONASH  
UNIV

Table 3 continued  
 Coding for Interview Data: Text Examples of Each Theme

Category	Extract
<b>Conscious Processes</b> Intrapsychic events occurring with conscious awareness	At that point there was searching time for me and checking what we wanted. In my asking I asked that if this being was right I would have it, but if it was not necessary I prayed that I would not have it. This was with God and also to the child. In the end I missed one month and probably about 6 weeks from conception my period came and the baby decided to go. Asking consciously whether this was what we or the baby needed. So the baby passed.
<b>Needs</b> Motivations for conception	What I got to know was my desperate, the very needy little girl who just wants to be held, not have sex; just to be held and comforted
<b>Feelings</b> Emotional states affecting conception	Unless you allow yourself to fully feel the loss, you will often conceive again quite quickly, which is very common.
<b>Spiritual Belief</b> Higher power involved in control of conception	Conscious birth control is a process of worshipping God according to his grace.
<b>Anthropology</b> Customs of other cultures	Some tribal societies use the idea of power, spirit, ancestral worship to contracept and sometimes those of us in the Western world lose sight of such simple things.
<b>Body Processes</b> Physical descriptions used in conscious control of conception.	I studied how it all happened physically and decided I couldn't stop fertilisation; it just seemed impossible. But I did feel some sense of control over implantation. Then it seemed clear that it was totally up to me as a woman whether or not I conceived. I could let the fertilised egg implant or not; offer it a home or not. It was irrelevant whether I had unprotected sex; the decision was totally mine.

Some of the general categories proved more useful than others in this analysis. There were many direct references relating to psychology and biology, while, as expected, the areas of anthropology and mythology proved more useful in providing an historical and theoretical foundation than in classifying interview responses. There were also several sub-categories which emerged from direct analysis of the interview data rather than from theory, including the division of the psychology sub-category of "intra-psychic processes" into "archetypal", "unconscious inner processes", and "conscious inner processes"; the creation of the sub-category of "needs", "feelings", and "creative work" (as sub-categories under psychology), and of the sub-category of "problems with other forms of contraception" (as a sub-category under biology), and "quality of sex" (as a sub-category under biology). The references to each of these areas in at least two interviews suggested the relevance of these categories.

The one theory based sub-category for which there were no references in the text was that of "ancient customs" under the mythology category. The one reference to the category of anthropology was in terms of tribal customs as they relate to conscious regulation of conception.

Table 4 shows the percentage of references to each sub-category for the whole of each interview for all subjects.



**Table 4**  
**Percentage Finds for Response Categories for each Interview**

Response category	Participants A B C D E					Total
	A	B	C	D	E	
mind control	22	30	11	7.4	7	77
unconscious processes	8.3	0	6.4	3.9	0	19
archetypal processes	0	11	0	0	0	0
conscious processes	2.8	8	11	12	3.5	37
creative work as motivating factor	0	4.6	0	4.3	3.5	12
needs as motivating	0	5.7	4.6	0	0	10
feelings as motivating	0	2.3	3.5	0	7	13
mythology: spiritual belief	11	4.6	1.2	17	0	34
anthropology: customs of other cultures	22	0	0	0	0	0
biology: body control	0	11	2.9	0	8.8	23
body knowledge	5.6	9.2	8.1	5.6	7	36
quality of sex	0	0	0	4.3	1.8	6.1
dissatisfaction with other methods	8.3	17	0	1.3	0	27
Total	48	83.7	37.7	48.4	39	

It can be seen that the coding categories which were relevant for all subjects were those of mind control (psychology), conscious intra-psychic processes (psychology), and knowledge of physical processes (biology). The categories which were least relevant were those of archetypal processes (psychology) and customs of other cultures (anthropology). However, for the two women for whom these categories were relevant to their subjective

LIBRARY  
MONASH  
UNIVERSITY

experience of conscious internal birth control, the percentage of responses in these areas was relatively high.

### Implications and explanations

The interview transcripts are an account of the subjective experience of five women with some form of internal regulation of conception. It could be argued that these words do, indeed, speak for themselves and do not need any analysis or interpretation. And yet, it is possible to further explore these words for meaning and understanding. The categories of meaning used in the text analysis of the interviews were derived both from theory and in response to the actual data, and so reflect both my ideas (and the ideas from the literature) about this process and the ideas of the women in the study. Do these categories offer ways to understand the experience of internal regulation of fertility? Can they explain what it is that is happening?

### Discussion of categories of meaning derived from Stage One

#### Mind control of conception

All of the women in the study had at least three children and all stated that central to internal regulation of conception was the unambiguous decision to have no more children. For all but one of the women, this decision predated the experience of successfully controlling conception. This is interesting in terms of the possibility that internal regulation of fertility could be understood as a personal cosmology to explain biological infertility. One of the most common responses I have received when describing my own experience with this method of birth control is the suggestion that I am actually incapable of



conceiving due to involuntary biological infertility rather than a voluntary process. If, however, this were the case, it would be expected that the decision to have no more children would postdate the absence of conception rather than preceding the period of choosing not to conceive.

The most consistent feature of the interviews was the unambiguous statement of the certainty of not wanting more children; "each of us had three children and neither of us could contemplate wanting an extra one", "knowing clearly that the want was for no baby", "I definitely did not want any more children", "I came to a point where I would have no more children for me", "my bottom line was and, I feel, still is that I don't want to have another baby", "No, I don't want another baby". This certainty appears to make up the core of each woman's subjective experience of consciously regulating conception, and is reminiscent of Irene Claremont de Castillejo's (1973) suggestion that "the ruthlessness of nature which discards unwanted life is deeply ingrained in her (woman's) make-up" (p. 94). Two of the women in the present study actually used the word "ruthless" to describe their process of deciding to have no more children.

The importance of an unambiguous decision to not have any more children, and the emphasis on the psychological category of mind control is not, however, surprising as the women were selected for participation on the basis of claiming to practise some form of internal regulation of conception, where they avoided conception through an inner process of which they were at least partly conscious. What is interesting is the different emphasis placed

LIBRARY  
MONASH  
MELBOURNE

on this process by the different women.

### Control of biological processes

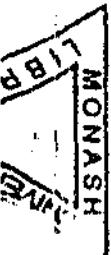
For two of the women, their experience of the process was strongly biological, with an emphasis on the physical aspects of conception; "an inner process of sensing the ovaries and fallopian tubes and uterus and saying, 'No baby', while imagining (the lining falling away and shedding completely", "there are those two points, actual acceptance of the sperm by the egg, then the acceptance by the mother, embedding in the uterus". For these women, the subjective experience of controlling conception involved consciously sensing or visualising a biological process and altering these to prevent conception. While all the women interviewed spoke relatively frequently of the biological process of conception and birth control, and showed an understanding of these processes, there was a distinct difference in the emphasis placed on the importance of the biological processes in preventing conception. As all the women interviewed showed a knowledge of the biological processes of conception and pregnancy, the differences in emphasis seem likely to be determined by factors other than exposure to biological knowledge. This is especially interesting in the light of the anthropological data discussed previously, where the biological processes of conception were not well understood and were not, therefore, used to explain conception. It seems that this is the case for some modern women who, despite access to knowledge of biological reproduction, still prefer to explain conception to themselves in other ways.



The emphasis on the body as central to the experience of consciously regulating fertility is reminiscent of the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962; 1964; 1968) which locates the body as the true subject of experience. This supports the ideas that what is happening for these women is not "mind over matter" but an embodied process of witnessing within the participation in lived experience, the mutual process of attraction, attention and experience described by Merleau-Ponty. It is also suggestive of the linking suggested by Bion (1959; 1962; 1963) and Braun (1988) in that these women are describing a relationship between behaviour, affect, sensation, and conceptual knowledge.

#### Spiritual beliefs

As discussed earlier, for pre-industrial people, the relationship between sexual intercourse and conception was not well understood (Malinowski, 1974; Spencer & Gillen, 1904; Troeller & Deffarge, cited in Rosenblum, 1976). Malinowski reported that the Trobriand Islanders believed that pregnancy only occurred when a woman "invited the spirit of a child to enter her body", and noted a very low incidence of pregnancies among the sexually active, but unmarried Islanders, who conceived more frequently once married. It is interesting that one of the women interviewed in the present study described "the point of saying no to the being who might enter" as part of her subjective experience of consciously controlling conception. For this woman, the biological process did not feature at all in her description of controlling conception, although she showed a clear understanding of the reproductive cycle. She did, however, place much emphasis on her spiritual beliefs,



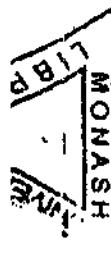
describing at length the relevance of her spiritual practice to her experience of regulating conception. The focus for her was, therefore, not predominantly biological but spiritual; "the point of saying no is to the being who might enter. A prayer of asking that sexual sharing is a process of worship and if it is to do with my will, I do not wish to have a child, but if it is God's will, then I will accept it ..... and ask to be protected from a child that does not really need to come".

For one of the women who especially emphasised the biological processes, there was no mention of spiritual beliefs. In the other case there was a strong emphasis on "spiritual belief" in the form of archetypal processes, "there's a sense of a feminine principle, sort of like the Goddess principle which has become so popular now. A feminine power which was part of this process of learning to manage fertility consciously". This statement echoes the mythological and archaeological images of the "Goddess Creatrix" (Gimbutas, 1991, p. 27) explored in Chapter 3, and the archetype of the feminine principle from Jungian theory, supporting the idea of the new mythologem of the feminine described by Whitmont (1982), Meador (1992) and others. For another woman, the reference to spiritual belief was much less specific, "there is a much more distant level, a thought perception rather than physical, meeting of bits of protein. Very much out there in the nether regions. I'm sure there is something there that it is possible for people to connect with". For this woman this is also linked to "the idea of power, spirit, ancestral worship" in tribal cultures.

Unconscious processes

It may be that what the five women in this study are describing is a process which also occurs for many women unconsciously, unreflectively. Perhaps some of the most interesting data to emerge from the first stage of the study was gathered indirectly during the selection of subjects for the study. In the preliminary conversations with prospective subjects, it was observed that many of the women who did not meet the criteria for inclusion, did, however, describe experiences of frequent, unprotected sexual intercourse that "luckily" did not result in pregnancy, although they had no experience of consciously regulating conception. These women also said that during these times, usually pre-marriage, pregnancy was "unthinkable", totally unacceptable for a variety of reasons. Once again, this is reminiscent of the reports of the low incidence of pregnancies among sexually active pre-industrial women for whom pregnancy would be unacceptable outside of a marriage arrangement.

It seems that there may be a phenomenon of internal regulation of conception which occurs with or without an explicitly stated cosmology regarding this. For the Trobriand Islanders, and at least one of the women interviewed in the present study, pregnancy was unlikely to occur unless the spirit of a child was invited to enter; for some other women, pregnancy appears not to occur if it is clearly unacceptable to have a child, and this may or may not involve conscious awareness of preventing conception. Two of the women interviewed described an experience of a relatively unconscious process which is more akin to the experience of the women who described avoiding conception "luckily" at times of unprotected sex. These two women

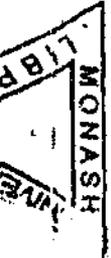


reported a period of time of knowing clearly that they did not want a child, yet they were active sexually and not using any conscious form of birth control. Their experience of not conceiving was not, however, surprising to them; "I was probably not surprised about this, just a fairly natural understanding and acceptance coming from a fairly unconscious level", "When we (women) are really doing things we are just doing them, and then people ask us and we say, 'Well, I just do it' ".

#### The feminine archetype

These last two statements are consistent with the earlier discussion of the feminine archetype, especially the transformative character of the feminine, which is said to be experienced unreflectively by women in menstruation, pregnancy, and childbearing (Neumann, 1991). It seems that what the two women quoted above are saying is that they experience an internal process of contraception unreflectively, that they just accept as "fairly natural" a process which they are "just doing". In this sense, internal regulation of conception may be seen as one aspect of the transformative function of the feminine, a process said to be experienced "unreflectively" by the majority of women. There certainly seems to be an indication of this in the numerous verbal reports of women who do not claim to practice conscious control of conception, yet describe "lucky" experiences of not conceiving over extended time periods.

In assessing the relevance of Neumann's description of the elementary



and transformative functions of the feminine principle in the light of the interview data, it is interesting to note that all the women interviewed described a relatively stable period of at least three consecutive pregnancies and births prior to their decision to not have any more children; a period of time that could be characterised by Neumann's delineation of the elementary function as "that conservative, stable, and unchanging part of the feminine which predominates in motherhood" (p. 26). Three of the women described their experiences of repeated pregnancy and childbirth, in retrospect, as a predominantly unconscious drive to reproduce, to meet previously unmet nurturing and other needs; once again, reminiscent of the elementary character of the feminine, which renders the individual childlike and dependent in relation to it.

One of the women specifically referred to "the Goddess principle", a "feminine power", describing "an internal dialogue with someone or something much bigger and more powerful than myself who was somehow responsible for things like conception and pregnancy and birth and maybe even death". This sounds very like Dexter's (1990) understanding that woman's "birth-giving powers on a personal scale mirrored the feminine principle of birth and regeneration on a cosmic scale" (p. 5). The internal dialogue described by this woman is like the process of active imagination described in Jungian psychology, a method for bringing previously unconscious elements into consciousness.

LIBRARY  
MONASH  
UNIVERSITY

Development of consciousness

The elementary character of the feminine is also consistent with the "naive" stage of consciousness outlined by M. Esther Harding (1973) as the stage where instinctual drives dominate the functioning. This stage is seen as nonpersonal and concerned only with the continuance of life, consistent with the unconscious drive to reproduce. Harding's developmental scheme of consciousness is, in fact, often reflected in the women's stories; the "naive" stage corresponding to the experience of repeated pregnancy and childbirth; the "ego" stage, or stage of individual "I", which Harding describes as involving attention wholly directed to controlling the environment for personal satisfaction, corresponding to the unambiguous decision to have no more children. The clear decision to change the pattern of repeated pregnancies and have no more children that is described by all the women is also consistent with Neumann's (1991) delineation of the transformative function of the feminine as driving towards motion, change, and transformation. This seems to offer a more congruent formulation of how all the women related their experiences than that of "rational intellect" or "personal will", definitions discussed earlier as relating to the masculine principle.

At this stage it does seem that analytical theories explored earlier in this paper do, therefore, have something to offer in understanding the psychological basis of the subjective accounts of conscious internal regulation of conception. It seems that the most useful analyses of these subjective experiences emerge from discussions of the archetypal feminine principle, and from descriptions of intra-psychic processes of change or transformation.

LIBRARY  
MONASH  
UNIVERSITY

Phenomenological psychology

The idea of intentional analysis was described by Husserl (1931) as resulting in the conscious awareness of a previously unconscious process. This mindful, inner observation is reflected in the interviews by the description of the internal experience of regulating fertility as "an inner process of sensing" and in the following description of the experience of entering into an internal state of mindfulness, "this is experienced through movement, sound, visual images, or an awareness of consciousness or an understanding of things". While these women were not explicitly speaking of "eidetic intuition", they do seem to be describing a sort of internal processing that involves both an immersion in and an observation of experience which allows for conscious awareness of processes which are usually out of conscious awareness.

Suggestions of Maslow's (1970) description of resistance to enculturation (inner detachment from culture) are also evident in the interview data through references to "disillusionment" with prevailing birth control approaches and statements like "I had no faith left in the medical profession", "they looked at me as though I was a bit peculiar", and "we belong to a group (which is not a mainstream religion)". These statements all suggest an inner tolerance for holding values or engaging in practices different from those of mainstream culture. The concept of autonomy (reliance on latent resources) is suggested in the statement that "It seemed clear that it was totally up to me as a woman whether or not I conceived", and again, "the decision (to conceive) was totally mine".

LIBRARY  
MONASH  
UNIVERSITY

Mythology and anthropology

It was expected that the historical, mythological, and anthropological information would be more contextual than explanatory, supporting the existence of the phenomenon and offering a temporal and cultural perspective. There are, however, some clear references in the interviews to the themes of feminine power and mysteries suggested by mythology, "She seemed to demand procreation from me (and other women) and it was as if my relationship with her had to change in order not to conceive", and to the loss of these, "if I am in my full womanness on a physical plane, if I had long flowing hair and clothes, I'd feel very vulnerable".

There was no direct mention of mythology or story in the interviews. The relevance of the anthropological information arises from one direct reference to the contraceptive practices of tribal societies; "Some tribal societies use the idea of power, spirit, ancestral worship to contracept and sometimes those of us in the Western worlds lose sight of such simple things". There is also the striking resonance of the references to "saying no to the beings who wanted to come in as babies" and asking "to be protected from a child that does not really need to come" to anthropological reports of birth control practices.

The information from these areas is still primarily relevant for providing indications of possible psychobiological birth control practices in other cultures and for providing strong evidence that any knowledge or practice of something such as conscious regulation of conception in European culture would almost

LIBRARY  
MONASH  
UNIVERSITY

certainly have been lost or destroyed in the two thousand years since "God was a woman" (Stone, 1978).

### Psychobiology

Psychobiological research does offer some theoretical explanation of the experience described by the participants. Studies in mind-body communication processes provide some understanding of how a neural impulse related to a thought or belief could be translated into bio-chemical secretions which control body processes such as reproduction. In this sense, all of the experiences of reproductive control described by the women in this study can be satisfactorily "explained" according to biological theory. Based on existing data (Blankstein et al., 1981; Davis, 1984; Harris, 1948; Pert, 1997; Stewart et al., 1971), it could be argued that the conscious intention to prevent conception is transmitted via neural pathways to the hypothalamus (and perhaps even more directly to other body parts) where it is transduced into the hormonal "messages" that regulate conception. In other words, the strong intention to prevent conception is communicated to the body via bio-chemical processes which affect fertility.

While specific endocrinological research designed to test this proposal is obviously indicated, it is important to note that none of the women interviewed in the study expressed anything like this level of understanding of biological processes, yet all still experienced conscious internal regulation of fertility. It is apparent from anthropological and mythological studies that humans do not need to understand the workings of a process at every level in

LIBRARY  
MONASH  
UNIVERSITY

order to assume some decision in the outcome. While psychobiological research in this area is not likely to increase women's understanding of this process, it may offer scientists insight into something that women are "just doing" anyway, and is, therefore, indirectly important to women because the phenomenon of internal reproductive control will probably only receive widespread attention and credibility, and, therefore, be generally accessible to women, if it makes "sense" according to the prevailing mythology (science). It is, however, unlikely that this line of research will attract the necessary attention and funding as it has little to offer the commercial interests which are so influential in scientific research. It seems that reproductive autonomy has little to offer church, state or multi-national corporations!

The information which emerged from the first stage of interviews and the preliminary conversations with prospective participants about the occurrence of unreflective experiences of internal regulation of conception is particularly interesting. In two of the interviews, women reported the experience of spontaneous miscarriage; "It was once I made the commitment to have an abortion, that was definitely what I was going to do and it was a very short amount of time, maybe a day or so after that.....I just let go and I had the bleeding", "I was able to let go of the baby and miscarry at ten weeks". This experience was also echoed in the verbal comments of women not selected for this study who described experiences of "spontaneous miscarriage" with an unwanted pregnancy, as well as memories of times of unprotected sex in which a mysterious 'something' seemed to prevent pregnancy. This relationship between a woman's intra-psychic processes and

miscarriage was suggested by Harris and Ross (1987) in their discussion of spontaneous abortion among prehistoric foragers, for whom an unwanted pregnancy was likely to have seriously threatened survival. As well as the subjective reports of the participants in this stage of the analysis that internal regulation of conception exists as a conscious practice, there are, therefore, indications that it may also exist, for women more generally, as a predominantly unconscious phenomenon, only experienced consciously or reflectively by relatively few women. The small number of participants meeting the selection criteria in stage one is, in itself, suggestive of this.

#### Review of Stage One

Initially it was thought that talking to women who have subjective experience of conscious internal regulation of conception would provide all the data necessary for this investigation. It certainly begins to answer the research questions:

- What is the subjective experience of a woman practising a psycho-biological method of birth control?
- What is the woman's understanding of her experience?
- Do these subjective reports suggest theoretical explanations of the phenomenon?

It also raises other questions:

- Are the categories of meaning which emerged from the first stage of investigation particularly linked to the experience of psycho-biological birth control, or are they relevant to other experiences of birth control?

- How does a woman practising a conventional method of birth control describe her subjective experience of this?
- Is there an experience of unconscious, unreflected internal regulation of fertility which makes up women's experience of birth control more generally?
- If it is the very subject matter of the present study which is eliciting the reminiscences about this unconscious practice, further investigation may reveal more about this phenomenon.

In the light of these considerations it was decided to speak with five women practising conventional birth control, to record their subjective experiences of fertility management. While this was never intended as a comparative analysis with the data from Stage 1, it seemed important to hear from some other women and to have a somewhat broader context for placing the information from the first stage of data gathering and sorting, especially in relation to more familiar, conventional birth control practices.

Stage Two

This stage involved interviews with five women reporting their subjective experience of conventional birth control methods. These women were selected according to similar criteria for selection in stage one, except for the method of birth control:

- aged between 20 and 55;
- had at least one full-term pregnancy and live birth;
- had regular sexual relations with a man believed to be fertile (for the purposes of this study, "regular" means approximately weekly) and used conventional birth control practices to manage fertility. This included the contraceptive Pill, the condom, IUD, rhythm method, and withdrawal (for the purposes of this study, no distinction was made between the different conventional birth control practices);
- had no reason to believe they were not fertile.

Interviews were conducted in the same form as in Stage 1. While there were obviously many more women available for this stage of the investigation, once again the criteria of information redundancy support the relatively small number of interviews.

While it seemed likely that these interviews would yield different information from the first interviews, the intention was not to simply compare



the two groups. It is already clear that the women have a different experience of fertility management. How each woman describes her subjective experience of birth control offers something important about her experience but it does not necessarily make good methodological sense to focus on an analysis of individual differences in this study. Stephenson (1953), for example, has argued that even when individuals gain the same score in a test, they may not gain it for the same reasons, and that it is the intra-individual "significance" relative to each person which ultimately reveals the presence of factors of interest. This stage of enquiry is, therefore, still most interested in the responses of individuals within the context of their own experience.

#### Research questions: Stage Two

- What is the subjective experience of a woman practising a conventional method of birth control?
- What categories of meaning emerge from the experience of women describing their experience of conventional birth control?

#### Analysis of interview transcripts

The interview transcripts (Appendix D) were analysed using the NUDIST software program (Appendix E) to identify categories of meaning. In this case the categories of meaning were derived from the text rather than from theory. Study of the material confirmed the expectation that the response categories used in the analysis of interviews in Stage 1 would be relatively meaningless. The women in both stages were talking about birth control but it

is obvious that they were referring to a very different sort of experience.

The interviews all involved a chronological description of birth control practices, with three reports of the same sequence of contraceptive Pill/ pregnancy/ other contraceptive method/ pregnancy (pregnancies)/ vasectomy or tubal ligation, over the entire reproductive history. There was also a repetition of early experiences of taking the contraceptive Pill without adequate information to clearly understand its function or consciously choose its use.

The text analysis revealed a consistent reference to what I have called *disempowerment*, a category derived from references to "no choices", "fear", "pushed around", "general ignorance", "control", "compliance", "no options" in all of the transcripts. The following extracts are examples of verbatim statements for the category of disempowerment/helplessness:

I think there was also the sense of something that was controlling me (the Pill).

Either the Pill was not helping or it was one more thing where I felt controlled.

We are pushed around a lot about when we should or shouldn't have them (children)

Compliance with the method (the Pill) seemed the best way to leave the surgery quickly

With no awareness that I was on the Pill and protected

Sometimes there are no choices

The fear of becoming pregnant and the following shame was always present

LIB  
MONASH  
HSNOR

I realised our general ignorance from start to finish about our bodies

The medical profession did not offer options

(The words in parentheses are inserted to clarify the verbatim reports.)

These statements were not accompanied by other references to an experience of power or control in the use of conventional birth control practices. In only one case was there any reference to empowerment, and this was relative to the lack of power and control in the experience of birth control;

after her birth my sense of my body was quite different. I felt powerful and complete and knowing, even though I became depressed. I was determined never to take the Pill or have an IUD again. Settled for a diaphragm for emergencies only. Became very aware of "safe" items and was very careful. Used condoms most of the time anyway because of AIDS' scare in the 80's.

Only now as I approach menopause do I feel I have a real handle on it all and a sense that I've done my child-rearing and that's it.

This is consistent with the suggestion by analytical psychologist, de Castillejo (1973), that contraceptives are "unaesthetic, and to a deep feminine morality they are wholly unacceptable" (p. 151). What is it that the women making these statements about powerlessness are saying? That while the birth control methods offered by medical science may have offered some control of the rhythms and cycles of fertility, they have not offered a subjective, personal experience of empowerment or control for these women. This is consistent with the historical and anthropological material discussed in earlier chapters which suggests that women's experience of fertility management has been

LIBRARY  
MONSIEUR  
1973

affected by political and religious issues of power and control.

While the expression of powerlessness in the interview transcripts is not surprising to me, considering my relationship with the whole area of reproductive autonomy, it may be surprising culturally or collectively. Women, after all, are supposed to have been freed from the inexorability of nature by modern contraceptive methods; what, therefore, does it mean that these women are expressing such dissatisfaction and disempowerment? The current research was never designed to offer generalisations and can, therefore, only pose this question, and suggest hypothetical answers. It is possible, however, that listening carefully to the subjective experience of individuals may be the only way to challenge a collective "reality"; it was, after all, the subjective experience of one small child, voiced aloud, which exposed the Emperor's nakedness.

Another category of meaning emerging from the text analysis was *dissatisfaction with methods of birth control*, derived from references to problems encountered with a particular method, or fears about using a method. This appeared in all five interviews. The following are verbatim extracts offering examples of the category of dissatisfaction with conventional methods of birth control:

I didn't really want to take the Pill deep down.

There was a fear of it (IUD) as I'd heard terrible stories of it messing up people's insides.

I was poisoning my body (with the Pill).

LIB  
MONASH  
UNIVERSITY

The IUD, it was unacceptable to me.

(The Pill) wasn't something you could relax about.

Condoms (were) considered useless.

There was something in me that didn't actually feel that comfortable with taking it (the Pill); I felt that somehow my body wasn't right.

These statements are similar to statements from interviews in Stage 1. It seems that one consistent theme is dissatisfaction with conventional birth control practices. This experience of dissatisfaction in Stage 2 can probably be related to the experience of powerlessness as these are women who were using contraceptive practices which were not working for them but who had no knowledge or experience of a viable alternative; "What I want to maintain is choice ..... we are pushed around a lot when we should or shouldn't have them (children) .....".

Another informative area is that of the expressed desire to become pregnant. Clearly in the case of the five women describing their practice of internal regulation of fertility, there was a strongly stated intention not to conceive. One of the women practising conventional birth control spoke clearly of an "underlying feeling of wanting to be pregnant or having another child" and that "even after four children I don't feel that I've finished". Another spoke of "the strong instinct to reproduce". One of these women articulated clearly that "it all comes back to my unwillingness to get any form of contraception right". A very different picture from the intention of the women interviewed in the first stage to prevent any further pregnancies. This idea of intention recalls the "belief" of the Trobrianders that the spirit of the child must

LIBRARY  
MONASH  
VIC

be invited to enter for pregnancy to occur (Malinowski, 1974). In other words, there must be an intention to conceive for pregnancy to occur. This understanding obviously has implications for approaches to the management of infertility as well as for birth control practices.

This idea is also implicated in the comments of one woman in Stage 2 about her experience of unconscious regulation of fertility;

I can remember the sensations of sexually active times before I was married when there would or would not be forms of contraception. There was a sense that I said, "No", to being pregnant. I don't know what was operating but I never fell pregnant even though there were circumstances like having sex during ovulation. Something was operating in me saying, "No, not now, it's not time", and yet I fell pregnant so easily (once married). There was something within. Even in circumstances when condoms would break or I was late for periods I never got pregnant and the minute I get married, I get pregnant.

Once again, the description of "something" happening to prevent conception, consistent with the anecdotal reports from the preliminary stage of the study, and with the anthropological accounts of fertility management without obvious external interventions of any kind.

#### Review of Stage Two

The language analysis of the interviews at this stage was textually based, with no initial theoretical categories of meaning. It was assumed that the categories of meaning derived from the interview data in stage one (mind

control, archetypal processes, unconscious processes, conscious processes, creative work, needs, feelings, spiritual belief, customs of other cultures, body processes) would not necessarily apply in Stage 2. While this was predominantly the case, with the strongest category of meaning in this stage emerging as disempowerment/helplessness, there was, however, a similarity in the reports of dissatisfaction with conventional birth control practices.

What, then, has this further analysis offered to the investigation of a psychobiological method of birth control? It has suggested some categories of meaning relating to the experience of practising conventional methods of birth control and demonstrated that while the categories of meaning emerging from the interview data differ between the two stages, the theoretical considerations of the earlier chapters do have some relevance in this context. The categories of meaning arising from both Stages 1 and 2 suggest possible factors which inform the experience of birth control whether it is practised conventionally or psychobiologically. Taken together, the subjective reports of all ten women can form a basis for further exploration of these factors.

B I L  
MONASH  
HSYNOW

Stage Three

This stage involved a Q-sort analysis of 30 women's responses to statements selected from the 10 interviews in Stages 1 and 2. Q methodology (Brown, 1980; 1996; Stephenson, 1953) involves participants in ranking and ordering statements generated from interview transcripts, allowing for a ranking and quantifying process that adds to the available information rather than reducing it. Quite simply, a number of statements are generated from the original interview transcripts and each participant is asked to rank-order these statements from agree to disagree. This can take the form of "like my experience/unlike my experience", or any appropriate pair of statements. The rank ordering is required to conform to a quasi-normal distribution ranging from +5 to -5. Results are then analysed using factor analysis to identify factors which are interpreted with reference to the original statements; "Despite its mathematical substructure, Q's purpose is to reveal subjective structures, attitudes, and perspectives from the standpoint of the person or persons being observed" (Brown, 1996, p. 3).

An important element in this stage of the analysis was the understanding of how the fundamental postulates of Q methodology differ from the more commonly used R methodology; in R, the researcher is normally dealing with objectively scorable traits which derive their meaning from the assumption of individual differences between subjects (subject a has more of trait A than subject b), while in Q, the researcher is dealing with the individual's subjectivity which derives meaning from the proposition that

subject a values trait A more than trait B (Brown, 1980, p. 19). It is, therefore, the participant's relationship with the statements that is being measured. Conventional factor analysis is based on a matrix single-centred for traits, while Q factor analysis is based on a separate matrix of data single-centred for subjects. This follows the understanding that "a person's subjectivity is merely his own point of view" (Brown, 1980, p. 46), rather than a trait or variable. Q methodology is designed to elicit what a person is saying in such a way that the researcher can discover something about what the person means when she says what she does, thereby exploring the person's subjective experience of the domain under study.

Specifically, this stage of the analysis developed in response to the statements about the experience of dissatisfaction with conventional birth control practices made by women in both Stages 1 and 2 of the analysis, and the statements about the experience of disempowerment in Stage 2 which are so different from the statements about the experience of autonomy and empowerment in Stage 1. These observations suggested the possibility of a factor in the experience of birth control which may involve issues of empowerment vs disempowerment. Stage 3 was, therefore, designed to explore the factors which underlie the experience of fertility management more generally, thereby locating the experience of conscious regulation of fertility in the overall experience of fertility management.

MONASH  
UNIVERSITY

### Research questions

- What factors are involved in women's experience of birth control practices?
- How can these factors contribute to understanding variations in birth control practices?

Rather than a simple comparison of interview responses from the two groups of women, the categories of meaning which emerged from the interview transcripts were used to provide the material for quantitative research using Q-methodology to find the factors of meaning in women's experience of birth control more generally. As the primary focus of this investigation is the experience of psychobiological regulation of fertility, the categories of meaning derived from the Stage 1 analysis were used to compile a list of statements extracted from the interview data from both Stages 1 and 2. In this way the resulting Q-sample of statements was representative of the experience of birth control as it had been described by all of the women interviewed, from the perspective of the categories of meaning that were most useful in describing conscious internal regulation of fertility.

### Research design

A sample of 150 statements was selected from the total of ten interview transcripts (from the five women describing their experience of practising conscious internal regulation of fertility and the five women practising conventional birth control methods). To reduce the statements to a

manageable number yet ensure that those selected were representative of the content of the interviews (Brunswick, 1956), statements were chosen according to the design presented in Figure 3. The dimensions built into the design reflect categories arising from the interview data as well as from theory. The final sample of stimulus statements, or Q-sample, was composed of statements matching as many of the design combinations as made sense according to the content and meaning of the interviews and the focus of the investigation. The design combinations were based on the "main effect" of orientation to birth control method (conscious internal regulation of fertility vs conventional birth control), with the other "main effects" (categories which emerged from the language analysis) treated as components of these and grouped with each of the birth control methods (see Figure 3).

Main Effects	Components	
<b>A. Orientation</b>	<b>(a) conscious regulation</b>	<b>(b) conventional birth control</b>
with:		
<b>B. Body knowledge:</b>	<b>(c) strong/well informed</b>	<b>(d) weak/uninformed</b>
<b>C. Dissatisfaction with conventional birth control methods:</b>	<b>(e) yes</b>	<b>(f) no</b>
<b>D. Spiritual belief:</b>	<b>(g) relevant to birth control practice</b>	<b>(h) not relevant to birth control practice</b>
<b>E. Motivation for birth control:</b>	<b>(i) feelings/needs</b>	<b>(j) creativity/work</b>
<b>Other experience:</b>	<b>Unconscious internal regulation of conception</b>	<b>Taking responsibility for birth control</b>

**Figure 3.** Q-Sample Design.

Theoretically, the combinations could be made by grouping all 5 main effects and their components with each other (a with b, b with c, c with d etc.) until all possible combinations were made. It was, however, considered more meaningful in this case to use the orientation to birth control (either (a)conscious internal regulation or (b)conventional birth control) as the basis for grouping the other effects. The specific groupings are shown in Figure 4.

Q Sample = (Main effects) (Replications) = ([AB];[AC];[AD];[AE];other) (m)

$[AB] + [AC] + [AD] + [AE] = [(2)(2)] + [(2)(2)] + [(2)(2)] + [(2)(2)] + [2 \text{ other}] = 18$

Where A = orientation to birth control; B = body knowledge;

C = dissatisfaction with conventional birth control methods;

D = spiritual belief; E = motivation for birth control.

Possible combinations:

A: (a) Conscious internal regulation (b) Conventional birth control

of fertility

ac

bc

ad

bd

ae

be

af

bf

ag

bg

ah

bh

ai

bi

aj

bj

Where c = strong/well informed body knowledge; d = weak/uninformed body knowledge; e = dissatisfaction with conventional birth control methods;

f = no dissatisfaction with conventional birth control; g = spiritual belief relevant to birth control; h = spiritual belief not relevant to birth control;

i = feelings/needs as motivation for birth control; j = creativity/work as motivation for birth control

Replication (m) = 3

$N = (4+4+4+4+2) (3) = 54$  sample statements

Figure 4. Q Sample with Main effect A (a,b) paired with all components.

This design ensured a representative selection of statements from all

sensible combinations of the categories of meaning derived from the analysis so far. It was not possible to include all combinations (women describing an experience of conscious regulation of conception, for example, did not ever express satisfaction with conventional birth control methods).

The following statements were selected as representing each combination, resulting in 50 statements (4 of the potential 54 combinations did not yield statements, resulting in 50 rather than 54 statements). These statements met the criteria suggested by Brown (1980); they were freely given by subjects, and there has been very little tampering and modification by the investigator, so that the person's way of expressing herself has been retained. This criterion aligns Q-technique with projective methods, such as the Rorschach, in that statements are left in their original form, complete with any ambiguity, in order to provide opportunities for response rather than extracting a response from the sorter.

Statements selected for Q-sort

**(ac). Conscious regulation and strong informed body knowledge:**

- 1) I have contracepted for many years now by telling my uterus no to implantation. This involves an inner process of sensing the ovaries and fallopian tubes and uterus and saying "No baby" while imagining the lining falling away and shedding completely.
  
- 2) In regulating conception it feels like there are those two points: actual acceptance of the sperm by the egg then the acceptance by the mother, embedding in the uterus.

8/1  
MONASH  
1/10

3) The no to being pregnant is in the vagina, the stomach, the legs, my whole being does not want to be pregnant. It has to be an embodied experience.

**(ad). Conscious regulation and weak, uninformed body knowledge:**

4) Choosing not to have any more children and doing this without any contraception is just a fairly natural understanding and acceptance and coming from a fairly unconscious level.

5) The man I was with said let's choose not to have any more children. So I said sure. There has not been any conception and everything else appears to be acting like clockwork. No change apparent in any way except no children.

6) We choose not to incarnate any more souls and this is a much more distant level, a thought perception rather than physical.

**(ae). Conscious regulation and dissatisfaction with conventional methods:**

7) It came out of disillusionment for me; nothing else worked. It seemed clear that it was totally up to me as a woman whether or not I conceived. I could let the fertilised egg implant or not, offer it a home or not. It was irrelevant whether I had unprotected sex; the decision was totally mine.

8) I had an IUD for some months and did not like it. I was bleeding very heavily. There was a feeling that on some level that I could say no to the beings who wanted to come in as babies. So I realised I was allowed to say no.

9) I had found the previous (conventional) methods unsatisfactory and I had reached the end of my options.

MONASH  
HISNOR

(af). No statements matched this combination

**(ag). Conscious regulation and spiritual belief relevant to birth control practice:**

10) There's a sense of a feminine principle, sort of like the Goddess principle which has become so popular now. A feminine power which was part of this process of learning to manage fertility consciously.

11) Conscious birth control is a process of worshipping God according to his grace. The process of saying no to the being who might enter is much more in the spiritual world than the physical for me.

12) Some tribal societies use the idea of power, spirit, ancestral worship to contracept and sometimes those of us in the Western worlds lose sight of such simple things.

**(ah). Conscious regulation and spiritual belief not relevant to birth control practice:**

13) You have to really not want to be pregnant for it not to implant and if it does to actually psychically abort.

14) Because I don't want to have another baby, the fertilised egg did not embed in the uterus wall.

15) What I find it's helped me do, to be conscious that I don't want to be pregnant, it's also set up a variety of other things. What I found was I was more in touch with my body and now I experience a sense of freedom sexually. There's not the underlying feeling of will I/will I not conceive.

MONASH  
HSYNOW

**(ai). Conscious regulation and feelings or needs as motivation for birth control:**

16) When I had feelings as though I might have conceived it was about emotions mainly of vulnerability and wanting nurturing rather than wanting a baby.

17) I consciously explored why I was having babies, the emotional and psychological needs being met by having a baby. For me this had something to do with unmet nurturing and dependency needs.

18) In learning to be more conscious about conceiving what I got to know was my desperate very needy little girl who just wants to be held.

**(aj). Conscious regulation and creativity or work as motivation for birth control:**

19) To say no to implantation has to be a trade-off or agreement for me to use my energies in other ways other than making babies. Like writing and studying and doing things that seem useful in the world.

20) If you are denying it in that form (pregnancy) then there must be some other form you are working in, that's part of the deal.

21) We had a feeling that we could go on endlessly, that babies would just keep coming, but that also we were given some degree of choice and that the choice involved responsibility and some consciousness that needs to be part of it.

**(bc). Conventional birth control and strong, well informed body knowledge:**

22) I noticed a bloating and swelling of the breasts and I remember about a year or so after and in those days they thought you had to go off the Pill to give your body a rest.

23) I took an early feminist stance and refused to take the Pill on the grounds that I was poisoning my body.

24) After the birth of my first child my sense of my body was quite different. I felt powerful and complete and knowing. I was determined never to take the Pill or have an IUD again. I settled for a diaphragm for emergencies only.

**(bd). Conventional birth control and weak, uninformed body knowledge:**

25) I was put on the Pill for heavy periods but I didn't understand that this Pill was the same as the contraceptive Pill. I didn't have intercourse but I was so naive that I had massive panic attacks after serious petting or kissing.

26) I have only recently found out that pre-ejaculation semen is quite fertile, which would explain a few things for me and ways of how I did get pregnant.

27) I realised our general ignorance from start to finish about our bodies and how we were passing that down to our children.

**(be). Conventional birth control and dissatisfaction with conventional birth control:**

28) The medical profession did not offer options other than the Pill, diaphragm and IUD and the Pill was by far the most reliable. But I didn't like the feelings that happened.

29) I hated the fact that I had to take the Pill, that it had to be in control of me, that I had to use something to control fertility.

30) My relationship with the Pill was that I really started to dread it. The changes in my body, it did something to me emotionally and a thinking or feeling process that was horrible. I really hated it.

10/1/87  
HSYNOW

**(bf). Conventional birth control and satisfaction with conventional birth control:**

31) I've also tried an IUD. That proved to be quite good in that you could put it in and forget it. I didn't have any problems.

32) Condoms proved to be very successful.

33) We solved the fertility problem because my husband had a vasectomy so I haven't had anything since then.

**(bg). Conventional birth control and spiritual belief relevant to birth control practice: (only 2 statements met this combination)**

34) I went on the Pill once but was given such a hard time by the Catholic doctor that I went to that I stopped.

35) My feelings about abortion probably come from very deep within about life: a foetus is life.

**(bh). Conventional birth control and spiritual belief not relevant to birth control:**

36) Even if I didn't want another child I don't want the decision made for me by surgery that I can't have any more children. I don't want to be determined by my body or by society or anything whether I should or shouldn't have children.

37) Compliance with the doctor's suggestions about birth control seemed the best way to leave the surgery.

38) I had a tubal ligation and thus ended my child bearing ability and any need for contraception. It was me who had to take responsibility for this.

HSYNOW

**(bi). Conventional birth control and feelings or needs as motivation for birth control:**

39) We were prepared for adulthood and sexual expression by an intellectual approach and physical descriptions of reproduction without any explanations of the feelings and drives which accompany such development.

40) My mother wasn't so much against sex as such but it was about getting pregnant when you weren't ready and I got the definite impression that it could make life change and not necessarily the way you want it to.

41) The Pill was one more thing where I felt controlled.

**(bj). Conventional birth control and creativity or work as motivation for birth control:**

42) For me knowing that I don't want a child and, being on the Pill at the time, what was operating was that my life was full enough as it was and a certain amount of self interest. There are things I want to do for myself. There was a sense that there is something I want to do for me.

43) Someone asked what was my biggest achievement and I said having my children.

44) I have the sense that if I had the capacity within myself to view when I wanted to have children that would be an enormously empowering thing.

**Other. Unconscious regulation of conception and taking responsibility for birth control:**

45) Something was operating in me saying, "No, not now, it's not time", and yet I fell pregnant so easily once married. There was something within. Even in circumstances when condoms would break or I was late for periods I never got pregnant and the minute I get married, I get pregnant. And so something was operating.

MONASH  
HISNOM

46) I can remember the sexually active times before I was married when there would or would not be forms of contraception. There was a sense that I said no to being pregnant. I don't know what was operating but I never fell pregnant even though there were circumstances like having sex during ovulation.

47) I was quite sexually active with a number of sexual partners and never in that time practised any form of contraception. The only awareness was that I did not want children, but there was no practice or awareness. I did not conceive.

48) My partner did have the feeling that it was the woman's choice and thanked me for taking the responsibility.

49) We are pushed around a lot about when we should or shouldn't have children.

50) Perhaps the attitude about me taking responsibility for the tubal ligation is encapsulated by a comment made by a man to his wife when a vasectomy was mooted, "What about my second wife!"

### Participants

The first thirty women to respond to a written request for participants (via the clinic where I have my private practice) were selected. The only criteria for selection were that applicants be female and have had some experience of birth control.

MONASH  
1/11/11

### Procedure

Women who indicated a willingness to participate were asked to select a time for the interview from a list of possible appointment times. They then individually attended a session at the selected time, at the clinic, to participate in the study. The session was conducted in a private room at the clinic, with no interruptions.

Participants were asked to read the 50 statements which were printed separately on paper approximately the size of business cards, and then to rank each statement by placing it under the appropriate category on an A2 size copy of the page in Figure 5. This method of manually moving the statements to the ranking, rather than the conventional method of participants allocating a ranking to each statement, allowed for greater involvement in the process. The categories were explained as the value the participant assigned to each statement according to her experience and participants were assured that there was no prior value assigned to the statements. The numbers in the brackets indicated the number of statements to be placed under each value, if possible, to produce a normal distribution of ranked statements.

Q-methodology does, however, allow room for some deviation from this normal distribution, allowing for idiosyncratic responses. This forced-distribution requirement is not as restricting as it first appears. As Brown (1980) points out, with  $N=33$  items and a 9-point scale from +4 to -4, "there are in excess of 11,000 times more different ways to sort the statements than there are people in the world" (p. 201).

The following introduction was given to each participant:

Here are fifty statements made by other women about their experiences of birth control. The process involves you reading these statements and placing them on the sheet under the value you choose. This whole side (researcher pointing to the left side of the response sheet) is for statements you disagree with or are not like your experience, with -5 the most strongly disagree and -1 mildly disagree. Similarly, the whole side (researcher pointing to the right side of the response sheet) is for statements you agree with or are like your experience, with +5 the strongest and +1 the mildest. The middle category (0) is for statements that are neutral for you. However you understand these categories is appropriate because this is about your subjective experience, so there are no right or wrong ways to understand the statements or the categories. The numbers in brackets are the number of statements that, if possible, I would ask you to allocate to each category.

DISAGREE OR UNLIKE MY EXPERIENCE					NEUTRAL	AGREE OR LIKE MY EXPERIENCE				
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
(2)	(3)	(4)	(4)	(7)	(10)	(7)	(4)	(4)	(3)	(2)

Figure 5. Response sheet for Q-sort.

After all 50 statements were placed on the response sheet, the ranking assigned to each statement was recorded on a separate data sheet (see

Appendix F), and the participant asked to provide demographic information of age, number of children, and methods of birth control used. The raw data from the Q-sort procedure is available in Appendix F.

The rankings from the 30 Q-sorts were analysed using PQMethod 2.06, a Fortran program designed for Q-sort data and compatible with Stephenson's (1953) broader principles of Q methodology. The statements used in the study were entered into the program, and then the rank values. Each Q sort was then entered in turn. The rankings were correlated and then factor analysed using the centroid method, followed by manual rotation of factors. The PQMethod program has provision for manual rotation of factors: the factor loadings are listed and one pair of factors at a time is rotated by indicating the number of degrees (positive or negative) of rotation. The goal of manual rotation is to get clusters of subjects close to an axis, generating the highest possible loadings on that factor for those subjects. The selection of the centroid method and manual rotation of factors was influenced by the theoretical considerations explored by Brown (1980), who argues that the centroid method, by virtue of its permissiveness, allows for a wider variety of factor solutions, an important consideration in exploratory research. In Q methodology, the variables are the *people* performing the Q-sorts, not the sample statements. People significantly associated with a factor are assumed to share subjectivity with others with a significant loading on that factor. Negative loadings are a sign of rejection of the factor's perspective. Table 5 shows the unrotated factor matrix, with factor coefficients for five factors for all respondents.

MSYNON

## Unrotated Factor Matrix for Subjects from Q-sort Analysis

Factor loadings: factors 1-5								
S	1	2	3	4	5	Age	Children	Methods used
1	64	-5	14	6	28	19	0	Pill; condoms
2	37	43	8	-12	-38	42	2	Pill;condoms;vasectomy
3	31	-34	10	9	-17	43	0	Internal regulation
4	20	-14	-29	-30	-19	35	0	Condoms;withdraw;rhy
5	23	10	-40	27	33	38	1	Pill;condoms
6	58	11	-12	-39	-24	32	1	Pill;withdrawal;condom;rhythm
7	36	-38	-10	27	-7	35	0	Pill
8	41	-6	20	12	-15	32	0	Pill;rhythm;diaphragm
9	49	1	36	1	-20	31	2	Pill;diaphragm;rhythm
10	42	17	6	18	21	41	2	Pill;rhythm;tubal ligation
11	50	16	-53	-7	-3	32	0	Pill; condoms; vasectomy
12	54	-16	19	5	12	26	0	Pill; condoms; withdrawal
13	51	-38	-46	1	0	40	0	N/a
14	29	39	-5	-4	-16	43	3	N/a
15	54	25	-13	1	1	49	1	Pill;vasectomy
16	49	-42	38	-29	6	30	0	Pill;diaphragm;int.
17	3	50	11	-37	19	38	1	Pill; IUD;condoms;rhythm
18	53	23	17	13	-27	42	1	Pill;withdrawal;int.
19	29	-53	-14	18	-23	51	0	Pill;rhythm; int. regulation
20	40	-24	8	8	18	35	1	Pill;condoms;withdrawal
21	22	-15	-18	-25	44	52	3	Pill;rhythm;tubal ligation
22	47	7	12	-2	-2	46	0	Pill;rhythm;diaphragm;histerectomy.
23	26	30	1	12	-3	42	2	Pill;IUD;condom;rhythm
24	69	9	32	-32	0	31	1	Pill;rhythm
25	22	25	5	24	15	39	2	Pill;condoms
26	34	-23	-7	7	-27	28	0	Pill;condoms;withdrawal
27	20	43	-23	49	26	49	1	Pill;IUD
28	35	20	16	-15	17	25	1	Pill;condoms;diaphragm
29	12	-33	-4	-25	7	45	3	Withdraw;Pill;IUD;condom;int.r
30	79	-30	16	16	-14	28	0	Pill; condoms; withdrawal

S = subjects 1-30. Decimal point omitted. Loadings >0.45, sig. <0.01;>0.35, sig. <0.05.

MONASH

Five factors were extracted from the initial analysis, accounting for 39% of the total variance. Conventionally, the statistical characteristics taken into account when selecting factors are the eigenvalue (EV), which is calculated by taking the sum of the squares of the factor loadings, and the percentage of total variance accounted for by the factor, which is calculated by  $100(EV/n)$ . The criterion for determining the number of factors to be extracted is often to select those with an eigenvalue greater than 1.00. Brown (1980) is very clear that this is an arbitrary convention which can constrain the meaning to be derived from an analysis. In the present case, the five factors do have eigenvalues greater than 1.00 and, more importantly, are also relevant theoretically. Participants 1, 8, 10, 12, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 28, 30 (factor 1); 14, 19 (factor 2); 5 (factor 3); 21 (factor 5) had significant loadings on one factor only, hence were pure cases. Participants 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 16, 17, 27 were mixed cases. Participants 3, 4, 23, 25, 26, 29 were null cases. A manual rotation was performed to improve the structure by rotating factors 1 and 2 by -20 degrees, 1 and 3 by -10 degrees, 2 and 3 by 5 degrees, and 2 and 4 by -5 degrees. These rotations served to simplify the structure of the matrix by maximising subject 2 on factors 2 and 5 (instead of 1, 2 & 5), 7 on factor 1, 13 on factor 1, 19 on factor 2, 3 on factor 1, 23 on factor 2, 26 on factor 1, 16 on factors 1 & 3 (instead of 1, 2, & 3), 17 on factor 2. The mixing of subject 24 on factors 1, 2 and 3, and of subject 15 on factors 1 and 2 detracts from the simplicity of the structure but the requirement of the Q-method program for retaining orthogonality restricted any further simplification in these cases. Null cases after rotation were 4, 10, 21, 25, 28, 29. The rotated factor matrix is shown in Table 6.

## Rotated Factor Matrix for Subjects from Q-sort Analysis.

Factor loadings: factors 1-5								
S	1	2	3	4	5	Age	Children	Methods Used
1	59	18	23	8	29	19	0	Pill; condoms
2	18	55	7	-7	-38	42	2	Pill;condoms;vasectomy
3	39	-21	19	7	-17	43	0	Internal regulation
4	29	-6	-23	-31	-10	35	0	Condoms;withdrawal;rhyth
5	25	12	-37	27	33	38	1	Pill;condoms
6	52	34	-6	-36	-24	32	1	Pill;withdrawal;condoms;rhyth
7	48	-25	-1	25	-7	35	0	Pill
8	36	-1	26	13	-15	32	0	Pill;rhythm;diaphragm
9	38	21	12	3	-20	31	2	Pill;diaphragm;rhythm
10	32	29	8	21	21	41	2	Pill;rhythm;tubal ligation
11	50	28	-48	-4	-3	32	0	Pill; condoms; vasectomy
12	52	-5	28	5	12	26	0	Pill; condoms; withdrawal
13	68	-21	-33	0	0	40	0	N/a
14	15	46	-7	0	-16	43	3	N/a
15	44	41	-10	5	1	49	1	Pill;vasectomy
16	53	-16	49	-30	6	30	0	Pill;diaphragm;internal
17	-16	51	5	-33	19	38	1	Pill; IUD;condoms;rhythm
18	39	40	20	16	-27	42	1	Pill;withdrawal;internal
19	47	-42	-3	15	-24	51	0	Pill;rhythm; internal
20	44	-8	17	7	18	35	1	Pill;condoms;withdrawal
21	28	-5	-13	-26	44	52	3	Pill;rhythm;tubal ligation
22	39	25	17	0	-2	46	0	Pill;rhythm;diaphragm;histerectomy
23	16	37	0	15	-3	42	2	Pill;IUD;condoms;rhythm
24	55	38	40	-28	0	31	1	Pill;rhythm
25	11	30	4	27	15	39	2	Pill;Condoms
26	40	-10	-1	7	-27	28	0	Pill; condo;withdrawal
27	8	40	-26	51	26	49	1	Pill;IUD
28	23	34	17	-11	17	25	1	Pill;condom;diaphragm
29	23	-25	-3	-28	7	45	3	Withdrawal;Pill;IUD;condoms;int.reg
30	80	0	31	16	-14	28	0	Pill;condom;withdrawal

S = subjects 1-30. Decimal point omitted. Loadings >0.45, sig. <0.01; >0.35, sig. <0.05.

MONASH  
HSYNON

In making sense of the resulting factors, it is important to understand that when a participant responds to a statement, the meaning and significance of this response for the individual may well differ from the meaning intended by the person who originally made the statement, or by the researcher, or anyone else. Each statement in this study does, therefore, carry a wide range of possible meanings. For example, with reference to statement 46: "I can remember the sexually active times before I was married when there would or would not be forms of contraception. There was a sense that I said no the being pregnant. I don't know what was operating but I never fell pregnant even though there were circumstances like having sex during ovulation", four participants volunteered the information at the conclusion of the sorting process that they were unsure whether to respond to this statement in terms of the sex before marriage or in terms of the saying no to being pregnant. Q-methodology approaches this by stating clearly that each person's response is subjective and self-referent, and that there is less interest in what individual statements mean theoretically than in what the subject does with them operationally.

However a statement has been defined theoretically in the initial selection process did not necessarily enter into the participant's understanding as she scored that same statement in the Q-sort. The Q-sort enables the person to provide a model of her experience of a particular domain. The sorting is interactive, dynamic, and operant, and the factors that emerge are "operational definitions" of the subjective processes which produced them. While factors indicate clusters of people who have ranked the statements in essentially the same fashion, it is not a problem that they may have done so

MONASH  
UNIVERSITY

for different reasons. Whatever the reasons, the cluster of people whose responses make up a factor have agreed with statements *a* and *b* (for example) more than *c*. Validity is not an issue because there are no outside measures of a person's subjective point of view (Brown, 1980).

The distinguishing statements for each factor were calculated by the Q-method program. The numbers in brackets at the end of each distinguishing statement indicate the ranking of the statement ( $p < .05$ ; asterisk (\*) indicates significance at  $p < .01$ ).

#### Distinguishing statements for Factor 1

##### **Positive statements:**

44) I have the sense that if I had the capacity within myself to view when I wanted to have children that would be an enormously empowering thing. (5\*)

12) Some tribal societies use the idea of power, spirit, ancestral worship to contracept and sometimes those of us in the Western worlds lose sight of such simple things. (5\*)

36) Even if I didn't want another child I don't want the decision made for me by surgery that I can't have any more children. I don't want to be determined by my body or by society or anything whether I should or shouldn't have children. (4\*)

10) There's a sense of a feminine principle, sort of like the Goddess principle which has become so popular now. A feminine power which was part of this process of learning to manage fertility consciously. (4)

27) I realised our general ignorance from start to finish about our bodies and how we were passing that down to our children. (3)

29) I hated the fact that I had to take the Pill, that it had to be in control of me, that I had to use something to control fertility. (3\*)

28) The medical profession did not offer options other than the Pill, diaphragm and IUD and the Pill was by far the most reliable. But I didn't like the feelings that happened. (1)

41) The Pill was one more thing where I felt controlled. (1\*)

1/27  
H.S. YOUNG

**Neutral statements:**

13) You have to really not want to be pregnant for it not to implant and if it does to actually psychically abort.

**Negative statements:**

26) I have only recently found out that pre-ejaculation semen is quite fertile, which would explain a few things for me and ways of how I did get pregnant. (-4\*)

25) I was put on the Pill for heavy periods but I didn't understand that this Pill was the same as the contraceptive Pill. I didn't have intercourse but I was so naive that I had massive panic attacks after serious petting or kissing. (-5\*)

Interpretation of Factor 1

The message emerging from these statements is one of pro-active choice, control, and empowerment. It is affirmative, strong, definite, and well informed. There is also an importance placed on the idea of spirit and the archetypal feminine. This factor could, therefore, be called "adopting an attitude of choice, respect, and empowerment about birth control". It is interesting, however, that there is no emphasis on actual practices which reflect this attitude in the selection of statements. In fact, the neutral placement of the statement, "You have to want to be pregnant for it not to implant and if it does to actually physically abort" may indicate a reluctance to put the ideals into practice in terms of alternative methods of birth control, or, perhaps, an unfamiliarity with the idea of viable alternative practices. There is also an apparent absence of the ruthlessness described in the original interviews with the women who practice internal regulation of fertility, as "really not want(ing) to be pregnant" received a neutral ranking.

These eighteen women (all loading positively on factor 1) are, however,

clearly placing value on attitudes and beliefs which foster choice and empowerment. Perhaps the statement that "the medical profession did not offer options other than the Pill, diaphragm and IUD ....." explains the apparent discrepancy between belief and action. There is the apparent desire to approach the experience of birth control with choice and empowerment but a lack of availability of or familiarity with viable alternatives. All of the women (except one who described a practice of "some sort" of internal regulation for the period of 5 years that she needed birth control) have used the contraceptive Pill for periods of time from 2 months to 20 years, with half of them expressing dissatisfaction with it: "didn't like having chemicals control my fertility", "very moody, felt invaded", "didn't want to take synthetic contraception any more", "stopped out of concern for the chemicals I was putting in my body", "loss of libido, didn't like it", "I was unable to 'stomach' the Pill", "bad side effects", "felt uncomfortable being controlled by a chemical substance", "I didn't like what it did to my body". This response of dissatisfaction with the contraceptive Pill is consistent with the interviews in both Stages 1 and 2.

The other half of this group of 18 women expressed no dissatisfaction with the Pill, with it being used for periods of time like 15 and 20 years although all but six women no longer use the Pill at the time of the study, and have used other methods such as condoms, diaphragm, rhythm method (ovulation), and withdrawal, with more or less success.

When completing the form at the end of the sorting, three of the women asked what to call the practice of "sort of being careful and just not wanting to

get pregnant" (or words to that effect). I suggested the term "internal regulation" which seemed to make sense to them in relation to their experience but they had not had a name for it before. Once again, a suggestion of something that women are "just doing", without words or even much conscious consideration.

### Distinguishing statements for Factor 2

#### **Positive statements:**

28) The medical profession did not offer options other than the Pill, diaphragm and IUD and the Pill was by far the most reliable. But I didn't like the feelings that happened. (5)

44) I have the sense that if I had the capacity within myself to view when I wanted to have children that would be an enormously empowering thing. (4\*)

30) My relationship with the Pill was that I really started to dread it. The changes in my body, it did something to me emotionally and a thinking or feeling process that was horrible. I really hated it. (4\*)

32) Condoms proved to be very successful. (3\*)

#### **Neutral statements:**

3) The no the being pregnant is in the vagina, the stomach, the legs, my whole being does not want to be pregnant. It has to be an embodied experience.

24) After the birth of my first child my sense of my body was quite different. I felt powerful and complete and knowing. I was determined never to take the Pill or have an IUD again. I settled for a diaphragm for emergencies only.

#### **Negative statements:**

46) I can remember the sexually active times before I was married when there would or would not be forms of contraception. There was a sense that I said no the being pregnant. I don't know what was operating but I never fell pregnant even though there were circumstances like having sex during ovulation. (-1\*)

25) I was put on the Pill for heavy periods but I didn't understand that this Pill was the same as the contraceptive Pill. I didn't have intercourse but I was so

naive that I had massive panic attacks after serious petting or kissing. (-1)

26) I have only recently found out that pre-ejaculation semen is quite fertile, which would explain a few things for me and ways of how I did get pregnant. (-1)

13) You have to really not want to be pregnant for it not to implant and if it does to actually psychically abort. (-2)

19) To say no to implantation has to be a trade-off or agreement for me to use my energies in other ways other than making babies. Like writing and studying and doing things that seem useful in the world. (-2\*)

34) I went on the Pill once but was given such a hard time by the Catholic doctor that I went to that I stopped. (-3)

15) What I find it's helped me do, to be conscious that I don't want to be pregnant, it's also set up a variety of other things. What I found was I more in touch with my body and now I experience a sense of freedom sexually. There's not the underlying feeling of will I/will I not conceive. (-3)

7) It came out of disillusionment for me; nothing else worked. It seemed clear that it was totally up to me as a woman whether or not I conceived. I could let the fertilised egg implant or not, offer it a home or not. It was irrelevant whether I had unprotected sex; the decision was totally mine. (-3)

5) The man I was with said let's choose not to have any more children. So I said sure. There has not been any conception and everything else appears to be acting like clockwork. No change apparent in any way except no children. (-5)

1) I have contracepted for many years now by telling my uterus no to implantation. This involves an inner process of sensing the ovaries and fallopian tubes and uterus and saying "No baby" while imagining the lining falling away and shedding completely. (-5\*)

### Interpretation of Factor 2

The message from this factor is one of lack of choice and control in the experience of birth control, a statement of powerlessness. These women want to have choice but respond negatively to statements which reflect choice or control, indicating that this is not their experience. Their desire to have choice and control is reflected in statement 44 (ranked as a significant positive expression), "I have the sense that if I had the capacity within myself to view

when I wanted to have children that would be an enormously empowering thing". The statement of this factor might be "I agree with the idea of empowerment in relation to birth control but I have not experienced it". This differs from Factor 1 in which none of the negative statements indicate lack of choice and control, while six of the negative statements in Factor 2 contain this theme.

### Distinguishing statements for Factor 3

#### **Positive statements:**

27) I realised our general ignorance from start to finish about our bodies and how we were passing that down to our children. (5)

1) I have contracepted for many years now by telling my uterus no to implantation. This involves an inner process of sensing the ovaries and fallopian tubes and uterus and saying "No baby" while imagining the lining falling away and shedding completely. (2\*)

24) After the birth of my first child my sense of my body was quite different. I felt powerful and complete and knowing. I was determined never to take the Pill or have an IUD again. I settled for a diaphragm for emergencies only. (2\*)

13) You have to really not want to be pregnant for it not to implant and if it does to actually psychically abort. (1)

#### **Negative statements:**

39) We were prepared for adulthood and sexual expression by an intellectual approach and physical descriptions of reproduction without any explanations of the feelings and drives which accompany such development. (-1\*)

48) My partner did have the feeling that it was the woman's choice and thanked me for taking the responsibility. (-3)

25) I was put on the Pill for heavy periods but I didn't understand that this Pill was the same as the contraceptive Pill. I didn't have intercourse but I was so naive that I had massive panic attacks after serious petting or kissing. (-4)

35) My feelings about abortion probably come from very deep within about life: a foetus is life. (-5\*)

33) We solved the fertility problem because my husband had a vasectomy so I haven't had anything since then. (-5\*)

### Interpretation of Factor 3

The message of this factor is about the polarity of choice vs no choice (with three positive loadings and two negative loadings on the factor, indicating a polarisation). It is a statement of the experience of disempowerment vs empowerment and rejection of conventional methods of birth control. Unlike Factor 1, this factor indicates some engagement of alternative birth control practices. The issue of body knowledge is also indicated as an element in this factor, with direct references to knowledge of the biology of reproduction and body knowledge expressed in the positively ranked statements. The element of ruthlessness is also reflected in the positively ranked statement, "You have to really not want to be pregnant for it not to implant and if it does to actually physically abort". In this factor, the experience of choice does, then, seem to be related to ruthlessness and body knowledge, a result consistent with the information emerging from Stage 1.

### Distinguishing statements for Factor 4

#### **Positive statements:**

31) I've also tried an IUD. That proved to be quite good in that you could out it in and forget it. I didn't have any problems. (5\*)

40) My mother wasn't so much against sex as such but it was about getting pregnant when you weren't ready and I got the definite impression that it could make life change and not necessarily the way you want it to. (5\*)

26) I have only recently found out that pre-ejaculation semen is quite fertile, which would explain a few things for me and ways of how I did get pregnant. (4\*)

38) I had a tubal ligation and thus ended my child bearing ability and any need for contraception. It was me who had to take responsibility for this. (3\*)

**Negative statements:**

3) The no the being pregnant is in the vagina, the stomach, the legs, my whole being does not want to be pregnant. It has to be an embodied experience. (-3)

5) The man I was with said let's choose not to have any more children. So I said sure. There has not been any conception and everything else appears to be acting like clockwork. No change apparent in any way except no children. (-3)

45) Something was operating in me saying, "No, not now, it's not time", and yet I fell pregnant so easily once married. There was something within. Even in circumstances when condoms would break or I was late for periods I never got pregnant and the minute I get married, I get pregnant. And so something was operating. (-3)

2) In regulating conception it feels like there are those two points: actual acceptance of the sperm by the egg then the acceptance by the mother, embedding in the uterus. (-4\*)

13) You have to really not want to be pregnant for it not to implant and if it does to actually psychically abort. (-5)

15) What I find it's helped me do, to be conscious that I don't want to be pregnant, it's also set up a variety of other things. What I found was I more in touch with my body and now I experience a sense of freedom sexually. There's not the underlying feeling of will I/will I not conceive. (-5)

Interpretation of Factor 4

Once again, there is a polarity indicated in this factor, with conscious mind-body birth control vs conventional birth control practices (one positive and one negative loading). This factor can, then, be interpreted to represent the basic distinction of conforming to conventional birth control practices and acting autonomously by practising some sort of internal regulation of fertility. There is less about choice vs no choice in this factor and more about the actual practice of birth control, "this way vs that way".

The age of the two participants loading on this factor suggests a possible age-related element in the experience of birth control. In this case, the rejection of conscious choice and psychobiological birth control is indicated by a 49 year old woman, while the opposite is held by a 32 year old. This apparent age difference is consistent throughout the factors, with all the participants under 30 loading on Factor 1, and 10 of the total of 17 under 40 (58%), where the statements reflect a positive value placed on pro-active choice, control and empowerment, albeit with little evidence of effective action in this regard. In Factor 2 only 2 of the 8 participants loading on the factor are under 40 years of age (25%), where the statement is one of powerlessness. While this is suggestive of possible age-related differences, the data from Stage 1 contradicts this. In this case, all five women, aged 38 to 50 years, described their experience of conscious internal regulation of fertility as an empowering choice away from more conventional methods of birth control. While there may well be an age related factor in experiences of birth control, especially considering changing social mores and scientific developments in the area, the present research does not address this directly. The indications are, however, that experiences of empowerment and choice are not limited to younger women and are, therefore, related to factors other than age.

#### Distinguishing statements for Factor 5

##### **Positive statements:**

38) I had a tubal ligation and thus ended my child bearing ability and any need for contraception. It was me who had to take responsibility for this. (5\*)

13) You have to really not want to be pregnant for it not to implant and if it does to actually psychically abort. (5\*)

MONASH

8) I had an IUD for some months and did not like it. I was bleeding very heavily. There was a feeling that on some level that I could say no the beings who wanted to come in as babies. So I realised I was allowed to say no. (2\*)

5) The man I was with said let's choose not to have any more children. So I said sure. There has not been any conception and everything else appears to be acting like clockwork. No change apparent in any way except no children. (2\*)

**Neutral statements:**

31) I've also tried an IUD. That proved to be quite good in that you could put it in and forget it. I didn't have any problems. (\*)

**Negative statements:**

28) The medical profession did not offer options other than the Pill, diaphragm and IUD and the Pill was by far the most reliable. But I didn't like the feelings that happened. (-3\*)

30) My relationship with the Pill was that I really started to dread it. The changes in my body, it did something to me emotionally and a thinking or feeling process that was horrible. I really hated it. (-3\*)

16) When I had feelings as though I might have conceived it was about emotions mainly of vulnerability and wanting nurturing rather than wanting a baby. (-4)

46) I can remember the sexually active times before I was married when there would or would not be forms of contraception. There was a sense that I said no the being pregnant. I don't know what was operating but I never fell pregnant even though there were circumstances like having sex during ovulation. (-4\*)

9) I had found the previous (conventional) methods unsatisfactory and I had reached the end of my options. (-5\*)

Interpretation of Factor 5.

Interpretation of this factor was considered useful despite the small number of participants loading on this factor, and the apparent contradictions in the ranking of statements. In an exploratory investigation of this kind, even data which appears less substantial can offer insight. The statement of this

factor seems to be one of assuming responsibility for birth control, with statements relating to both conventional practices and internal regulation. All the positive statements are about deciding to take a definite action to manage fertility. This factor does, then, address *behaviours* of fertility management which reflect taking responsibility. This is different from Factor 1 in which the emphasis is on valuing choice, control, and empowerment, with little emphasis on actual behaviours which support this. It must, however, be remembered that the two participants loading on this factor have one negative and one positive loading, suggesting a polarisation around the issues. Closer examination of the actual rankings does reveal this in terms of statement 38: "I had a tubal ligation and thus ended my child bearing ability and any need for contraception. It was me who had to take responsibility for this", and statement 13: "You have to really not want to be pregnant for it not to implant and if it does to actually psychically abort". In this case, therefore, one person is clearly describing an experience of taking responsibility for birth control via a definite action while the other is not. The experience of ruthlessness once again appears in statement 13.

#### Interpretation of statements 45, 46, and 47.

These statements were included in the Q-sort to gather information about the experience of unconscious internal regulation of fertility, which was described by women in the interviews in Stages 1 and 2, and by the women responding to the search for participants in Stage 1. The following statements were selected from the interview transcripts as descriptions of the experience of unconscious internal regulation of fertility:

45) Something was operating in me saying, "No, not now, it's not time", and yet I fell pregnant so easily once married. There was something within. Even in circumstances when condoms would break or I was late for periods I never got pregnant and the minute I get married, I get pregnant. And so something was operating.

46) I can remember the sexually active times before I was married when there would or would not be forms of contraception. There was a sense that I said no to being pregnant. I don't know what was operating but I never fell pregnant even though there were circumstances like having sex during ovulation.

47) I was quite sexually active with a number of sexual partners and never in that time practised any form of contraception. The only awareness was that I did not want children, but there was no practice or awareness. I did not conceive.

These statements did not contribute significantly to the interpretation of the factors which emerged from the Q-sort analysis. To further explore this specific area, the rankings for the three statements for each of the thirty participants were considered (see Table 7). While this is a deviation from the form of Q-methodology, it was considered important to consider the question of unconscious internal regulation of fertility more closely. Using the Q-sort data in this way is, however, inherently limited in terms of interpretation as it is well recognised that the meaning ascribed to the statements by the participants may not accord with the meaning of person making the original statement or with the meaning ascribed by the researcher. What the following table does indicate is the participant's relationship with the statements.

Table 7.  
Total Responses for Each Ranking for Statements 45, 46, and 47

Number of responses for each ranking											
Ranking	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
statement 45	2	3	2	3	2	6	2	4	1	3	2
statement 46	1	3	3	5	3	1	5	2	1	5	1
statement 47	3	7	5	1	3	6	1		1	3	

What this table shows is that the phenomenon described in statements 45, 46, and 47 was allocated a positive ranking by 34.7% of participants. Statement 45 which refers to "something within" which was apparently operating unconsciously to prevent pregnancy without the use of conventional birth control methods, was allocated a positive ranking by 50% of participants. The greater number of participants allocating a positive ranking to statement 45 can partly be explained by the wording of the statements; both statements 46 and 47 refer to sexually active times either before marriage or with a number of partners, while statement 45 describes the experience of unconscious internal birth control without mentioning sexual activity. It has already been observed that some participants expressed uncertainty about how to rank these statements: with reference to the content regarding sexual activity or with reference to the "something" that was operating to prevent unwanted pregnancy. However this is interpreted, this result does indicate that these women were agreeing with the statement that "something was operating" internally (arguably psychobiologically) to prevent pregnancy without conscious awareness of this process.

This result offers some tentative support for the proposition which emerged from the initial stage of the analysis, that some form of psychobiological birth control may be practised by women without conscious awareness; "I don't know what was operating but i never fell pregnant even though there were circumstances like having sex during ovulation". This is certainly an area of experience that warrants further investigation.

Review of Q-sort analysis.

A methodological consideration arose in stage three in terms of a possible form of the "social desirability" variable (Edwards, 1957). The respondents in the study were all familiar with the research topic from previous discussion about participation and most responded with apparent interest and curiosity to the idea of psychobiological birth control. Do the results reflect the tendency for people to present a picture to the world that they can anticipate will be well received, and ideal viewpoint rather than an actual one? While this is always possible, the conditions of the sorting would not be conducive to this; fifty statements have to be sorted into categories with some element of forced choice. The structure of the Q-sort scale to include "agree" or "like my experience" (and "disagree" or "unlike my experience") also provided some safeguard against this. While it may seem somewhat confusing at first glance, respondents were advised to make sense of these categories in their own way, producing the effect of a "kind of thought maze through which the subject's attitude wanders, attaching itself to this idea, rejecting that one, ignoring others" (Brown, 1980, p. 31). Once again, this can be understood to provide an *opportunity* for response rather than simply evoking a response. The verbal reports of participants after completing the sorting indicated that it was an absorbing process which required several stages of ordering and reordering the statements, and could not be completed automatically or unthinkingly. The individual cards for each statement allowed for actual movement of the statements from one rank to another as the overall picture became clearer for the sorter. The time involved in the sorting process was between 30 and 50 minutes.

Overall, this stage of the research has offered some answers to the questions of what factors are involved in women's experience of birth control practices more generally, with the prevailing themes involving choice, control and empowerment or the absence of these. The second research question of how these factors contribute to understanding variations in birth control practices is central to this whole paper and is further explored in the final discussion in Chapter 8.

#### Additional stage of analysis

Following the Q-sort session, all participants were invited to participate in a further stage of this process. Participation was determined by available time and willingness to engage in the extra work involved. It was made clear that any further participation was not essential for the central research. Seven women agreed to participate. After completing the sorting, they attended a second session where the process of focusing (as described in Chapter 5) was introduced and practised. The actual script used for this is in Appendix G. The participant sat comfortably in a chair and I led her through the focusing process as it is in the script, focusing on an issue of her choice, and then, when this process was completed and she was comfortable to continue, a second focusing process was engaged in relation to her experience of birth control. For each participant an image emerged from this process and they each gave permission for it to be included in the report. The idea to use the focusing process at this stage, if the participant had the available time and willingness to engage the extra work, arose in response to the philosophical dilemma about language and experience explored in Chapter 2. While the words in this paper are essential, the images are another, perhaps more

immediate, expression of subjective experience, and comprise one of the links in this. In this context, "images" are considered to be pictures as well as memories, dreams, and descriptions of inner processes. This is consistent with the work of Achterberg, Dossey and Kolkmeier (1994) whose research into mind-body healing processes has suggested this broader definition of image. In an earlier work, Achterberg (1985) describes imagery as "the thought process that invokes and uses the senses: vision, audition, smell, taste, the senses of movement, position, and touch" (p. 3). The images are presented in the following pages with any words offered by the respondents.

Respondent images from focusing process

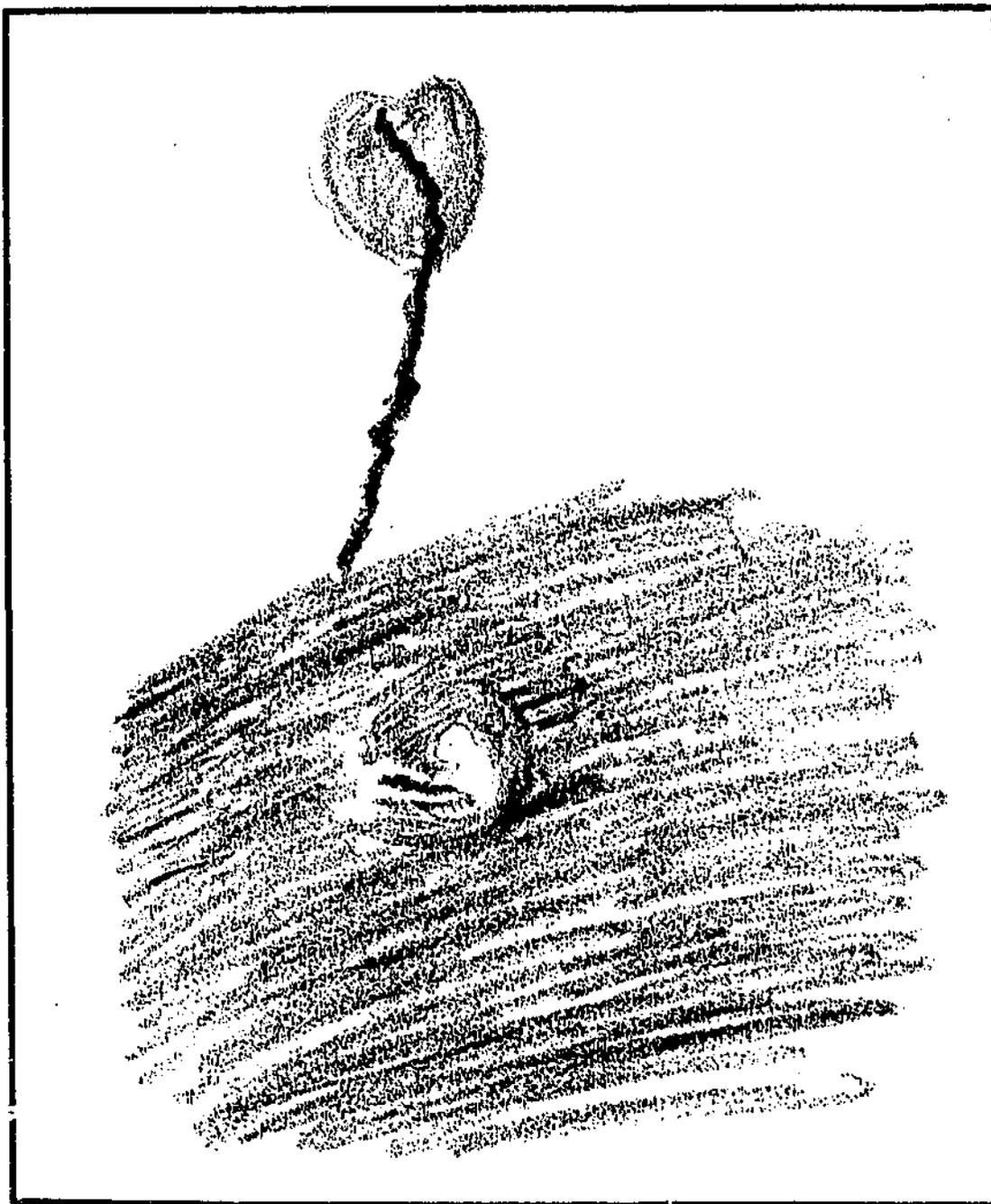
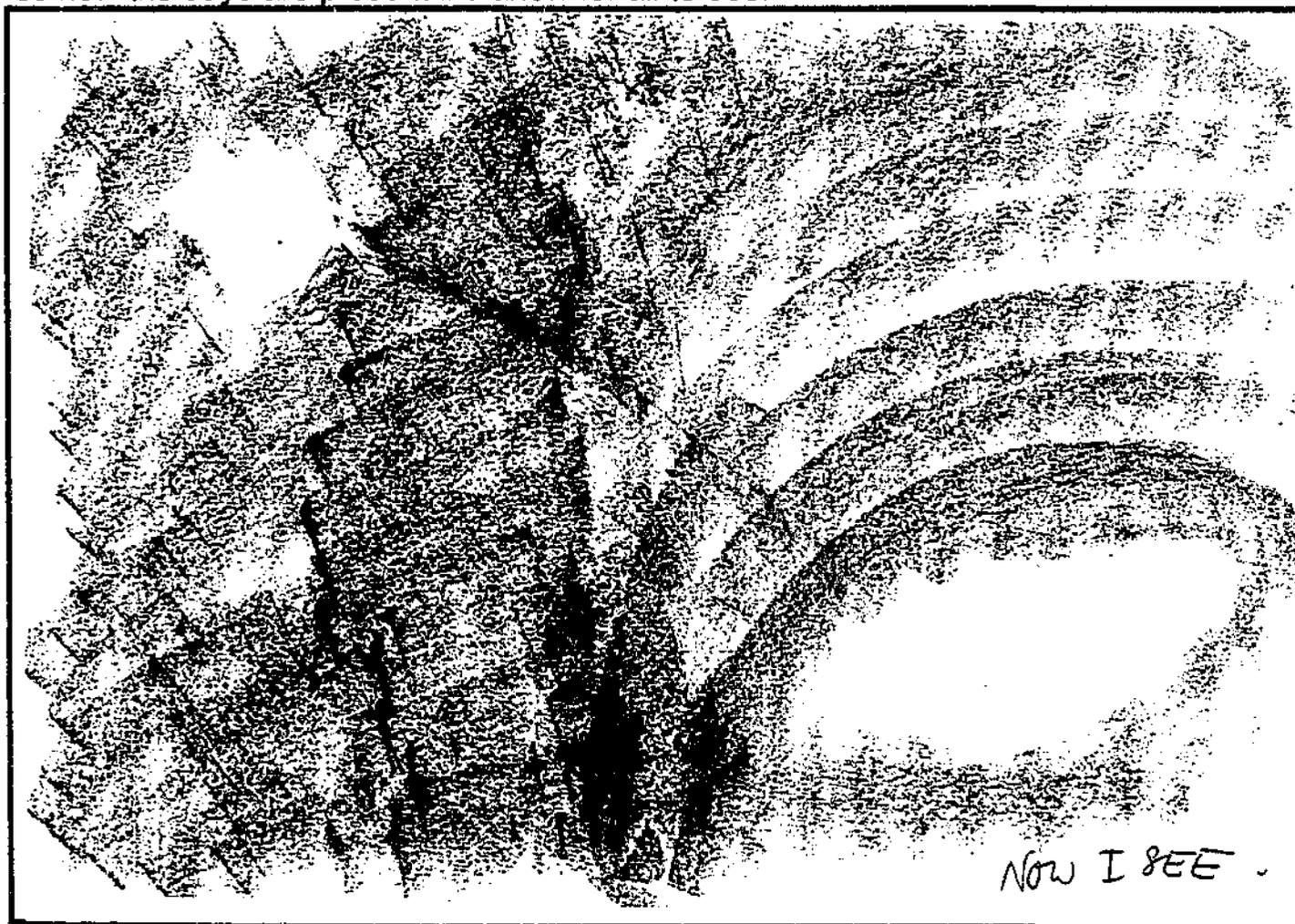


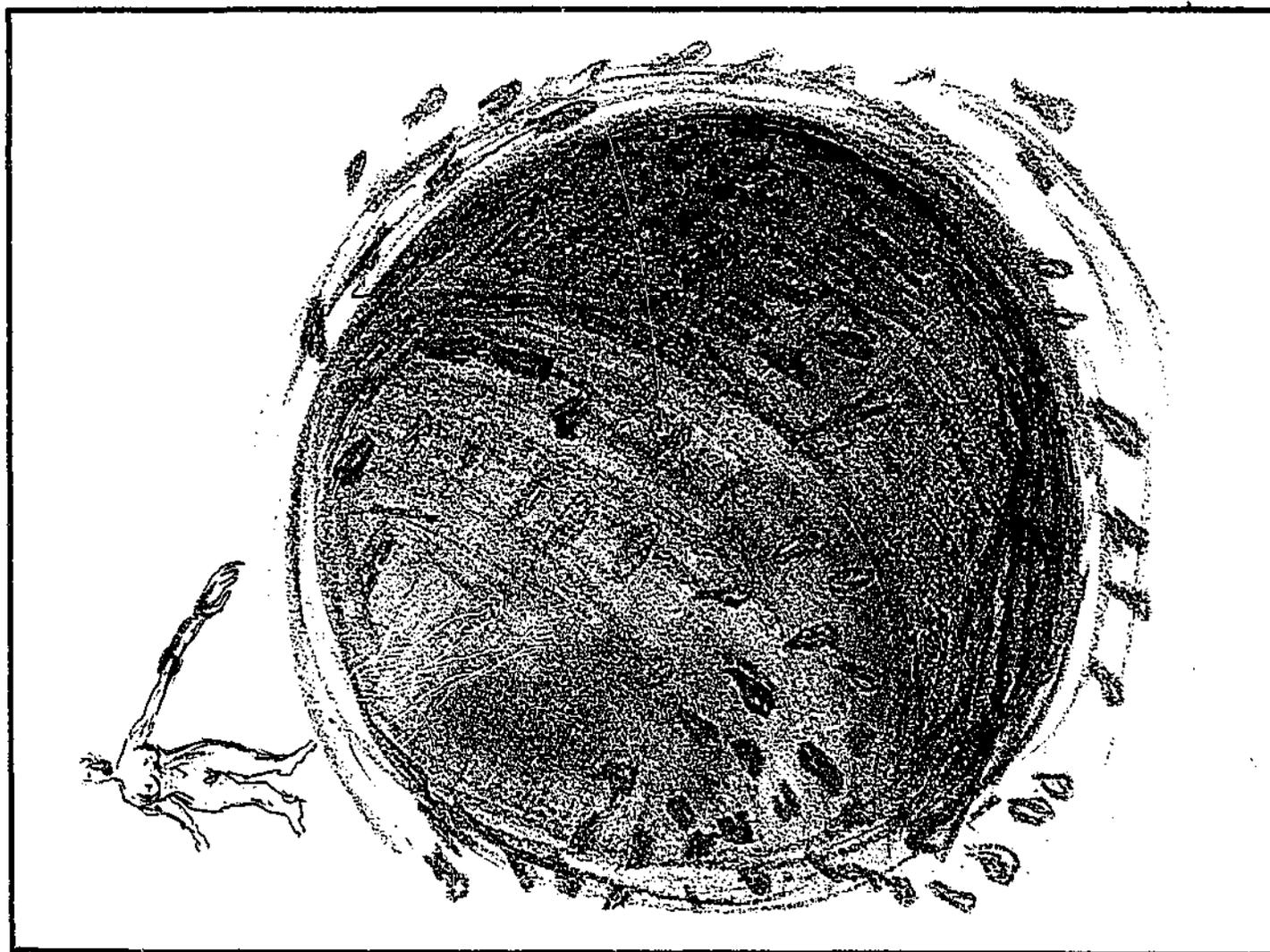
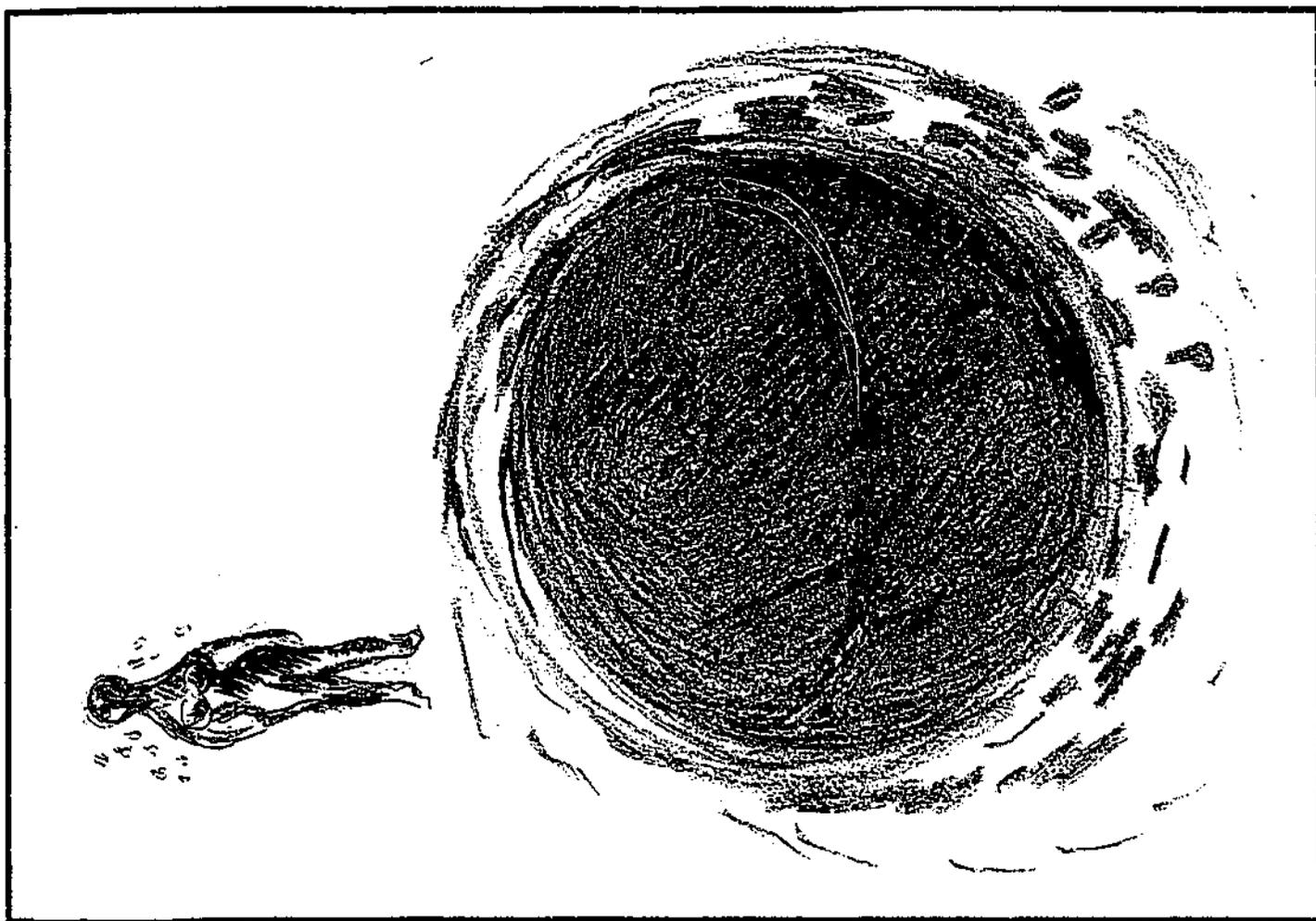
Image 1. Respondent 25.



O dead space gone and yet not forgotten - where if only I knew. Now - today - but all forgotten - nice to know that all is free - Baby, babies - come and coming - gone forever now I see. When the time was long forgotten - knowing that She was with me - so now the days are present life anew for all to see.



Images 2 and 3. Respondent 21.



Images 4 and 5. Respondent 17.

MONASH

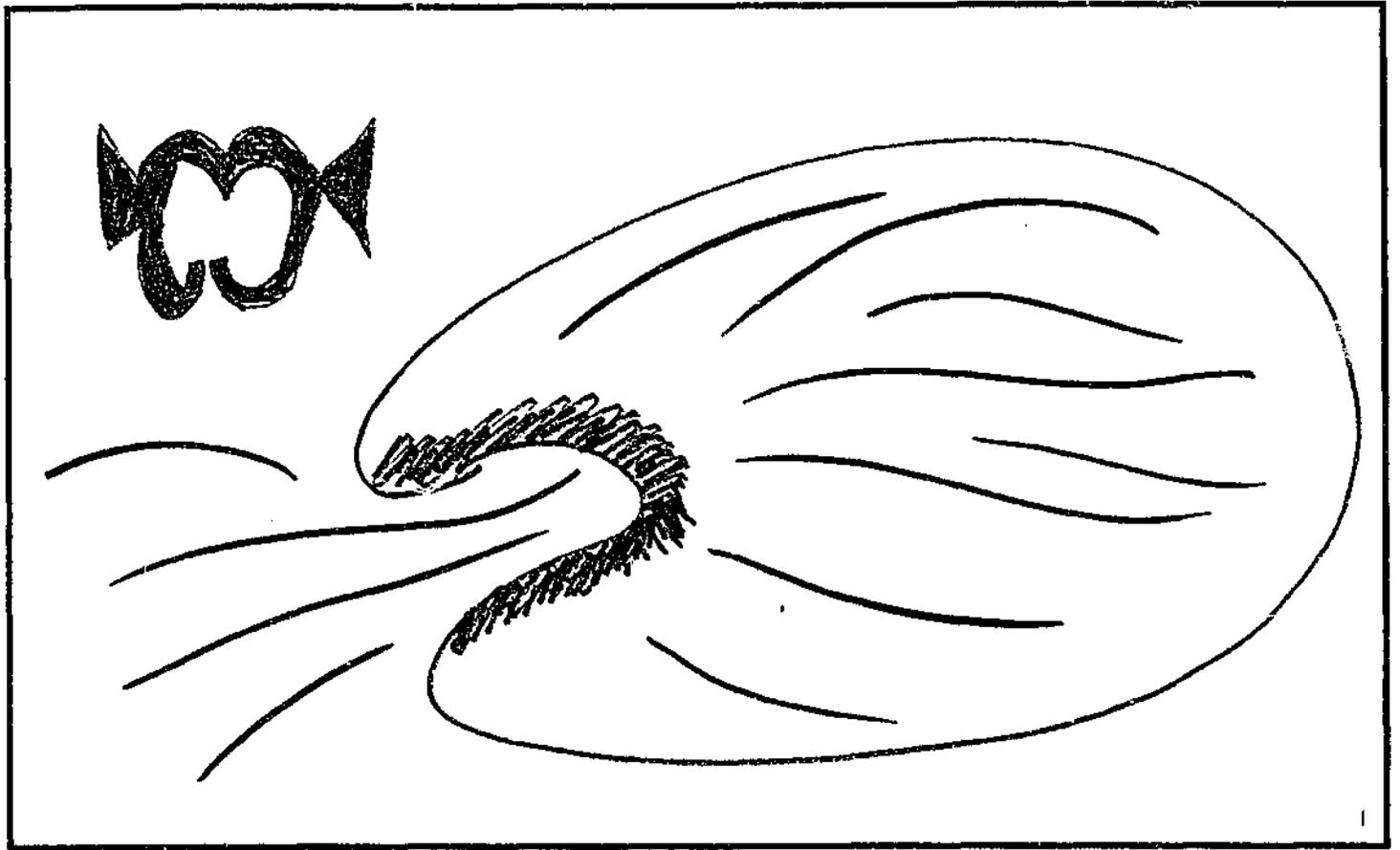


Image 6. Respondent 23.

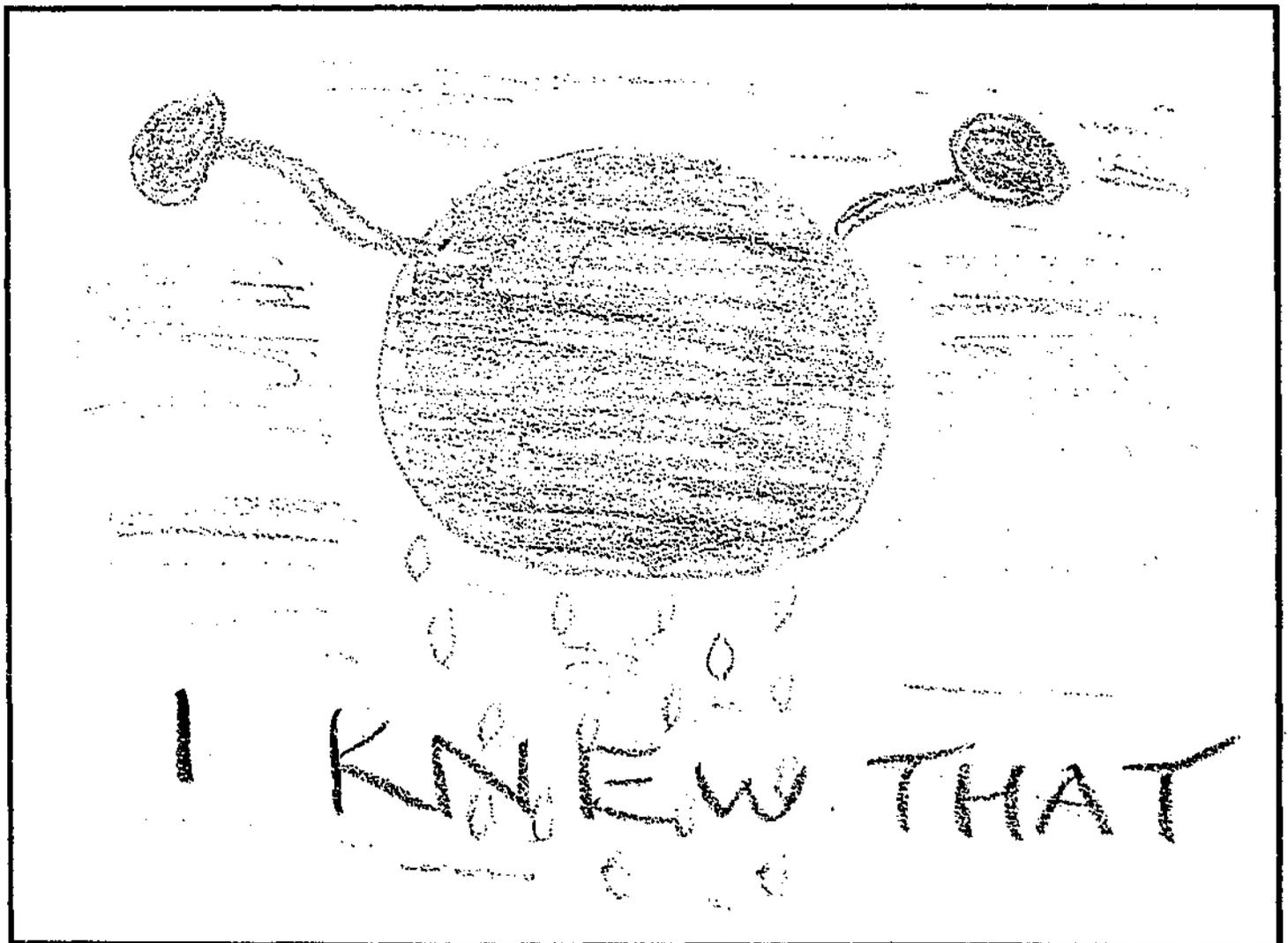


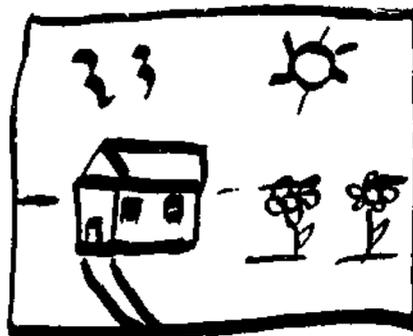
Image 7. Respondent 22.

MONASH

Focusing on issue of contraception. The focusing for me was like a dream in that I was doing two things at the same time. One part of me was registering disbelief, that a woman could control conception -no way! Sperm and egg uniting meant, for me, fertilisation which eventually produced a child which would become my responsibility.

Alongside this thought I could see myself sitting at the kitchen table listening to my father and mother talking and I heard my father say, "Non si puo controllare". (He couldn't control himself). Even as a child I knew what this meant - it meant that the male was not able to control ejaculation and hadn't 'withdrawn' fast enough. I may not have had the adult words but I certainly had the concept.

Even though the child in my focusing was calmly drawing her picture, my adult reaction



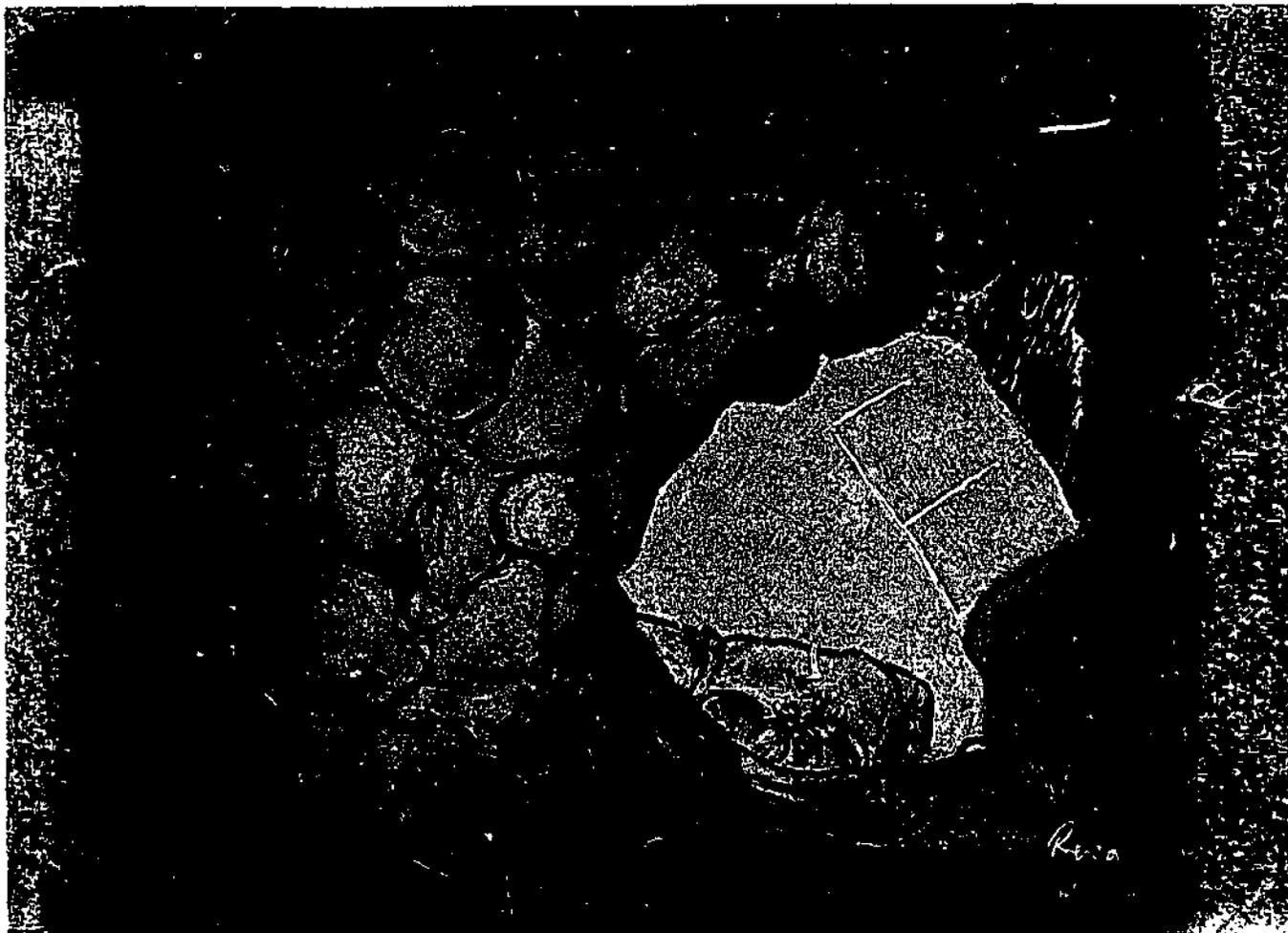
was intense. My mouth filled with hot saliva and I kept swallowing and I was thinking, "oh my god I'm going to vomit." I could feel goosebumps on my arms and my thoughts were frantic, Did I really only want one child or had my father programmed me to thinking lots of children meant lack of control? Why did I think it was my lack of control? Did I make free choices or were they my father's choices? Have I been living my father's life as well as my own?

Dream following focusing: I am the daughter of a Greek couple. I am happy and contented as I walk into the kitchen of my house. I can feel tension and I sense that something is wrong. I see my mother sitting at the table reading the newspaper and I can see she is crying because there are tears pouring down her face. When she sees me she cries, "Your father is alive! Your father is alive!" I'm thoroughly confused. I know my father is alive - I'm living with him. I scrunch up my face, shake my head and gesture as if to ask, "What are you talking about?". My mother shows me the newspaper and I see a man with a moustache. The child doesn't know the man but I know it is a picture of my father when he was 30 years old taken at Luna Park.

I did another focusing after the dream and saw the man my father was referring to in the previous focusing. He was my father's solicitor and friend. He visited our home once a week for forty years to get away from the "mad house" which is how he referred to his home. The strange thing about this friendship was that it was between the two men. It was only in the last months of his life when he could no longer drive that he introduced us to his wife.

Image 8. Respondent 27.

MONASH



Inner room.

Familiar, warm inviting place.

Ancient knowings.

Warm light emanating from within.

A place to make decisions, where I make my decisions.

My place of comfort, "Go within and breathe".

I do not know how this place of comfort arose; it was just always there.

In light of contracepting internally, this area of knowing is situated in my lower belly and the trapdoor is the door of contraception - that is closed at the moment to my uterus and cervix. It is a really simple procedure that requires maintenance and constant attending at the end and beginning of each menstrual cycle.

It is a room all who have seen it recognise: "The Inner Chamber".

Quiet, ancient knowings, very different to the logos time of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet it transcends time, being very relevant to me in this time/era. This place of knowledge and peace.

Image 9. Respondent 16.

There is a suggestion in these images of a relationship between emotion and sensation, between the body sense and other internal processes which, via the focusing process, can become conscious in the form of images, which can link sensation and emotion to cognitive understandings (Braun, 1988). This is like the statements of women describing the experience of internal regulation of fertility as making the "process of conception more conscious" and "the no to being pregnant is in the vagina, the stomach, the legs.....". While only one of the women engaging this stage of the analysis (Image 9) described the experience of internal regulation of fertility, it may be that the sort of immersion experienced via the focusing process is one of the processes which occurs naturally for women who have developed a method of psychobiological birth control.

It is possible to consider the relationship between the images and the participant's loading on a specific factor. In exploring this for each image it becomes obvious that there is, in fact, a relationship which can be inferred between the participant's loading on a factor and the image(s) which emerged through the focusing process. While this is not a statistically determined relationship, there are some convincing parallels between the images and the factor interpretations. As well as providing further information about the experience of birth control, these observations do, therefore, offer support for the claim that Q methodology does, in fact, measure subjective experience.

Image 1 (participant 25) is not related to a factor in the current analysis.

Images 2 and 3 (participant 21) are related to a positive loading on Factor 5, with its statement of taking a definite action to manage fertility, addressing behaviours of fertility management which reflect taking responsibility, in this case via a conventional method such as tubal ligation. The words refer to a "dead space gone and yet not forgotten".

Images 4 and 5 (participant 17) are related to Factor 2 (positive loading) and Factor 4 (negative loading), suggesting an experience of powerlessness and lack of choice in the practice of conventional birth control.

Image 6 (participant 23) is related to a positive loading on Factor 2, with its message of lack of choice and control in the experience of birth control.

Image 7 (participant 22) is related to a positive loading on Factor 1, with the message of pro-active choice, control, and empowerment with no emphasis on actual practices which reflect this. The image suggests a retrospective realisation of knowledge about birth control in the statement, "I knew that", consistent with the mix of wanting choice, control, and empowerment in the experience of birth control but not actually finding it in practice.

Image 8 (participant 27) is related to positive loadings on both Factors 2 and 4, suggesting a rejection of conscious choice in birth control and an experience of powerlessness. The words which accompany this image are consistent with this interpretation, and they also describe an important understanding of the intra-psychic dynamics involved in the rejection of

conscious choice in birth control which emerged for the participant via the process of the investigation. The description of this experience is an example of the interplay between conscious and unconscious dynamics in fertility. This woman's realisation that reproductive decisions had been determined, at least in part, by childhood experiences of father is a metaphor for the reproductive history of our culture as well as a profound personal discovery.

Image 9 (participant 16) is related to a positive loading on Factors 1 and 3, suggesting the importance of pro-active choice, control, and empowerment indicated in Factor 1 as well as the engagement of alternative birth control practices indicated in Factor 3. This is, in fact, reflected in the words which accompany this image, describing "contracepting internally", an experience which "is situated in my lower belly and the trapdoor is the door of contraception - that is closed at the moment to my uterus and cervix. It is a really simple procedure that requires maintenance and constant attending at the end and beginning of each menstrual cycle". This image is confirming of the interpretations of Factors 1 and 3, and of the usefulness of the factors in describing elements of subjective experience. This woman's commitment to choice, control, and empowerment in birth control showed up in Factor 1 but, unlike most of the other participants loading on Factor 1, this participant also showed a positive loading on Factor 3 with its message of engaging alternative birth control practices, a combination of elements which emerges in the image.

There is obvious potential for further study of the relationship between

MONASH

the subjective experience of birth control and images arising from processes like focusing. This area of investigation has been extensively explored in relation to healing by Achterberg (1985), who has asked, "What are the far limits of our ability to consciously communicate with body function?" (p. 198). The information arising from the current investigation suggests that, in relation to fertility management, the "far limits" may be closer and more accessible than once thought. The women participating in this last stage of the study all reported that the experience was of personal value in terms of understanding their relationship with birth control. The images and associated words, memories and, in one case, a dream, offer a potentially important link in the ongoing exploration of women's experience of reproductive autonomy.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

Implications of findings for explaining psychobiological birth control

The themes of choice vs no choice, empowerment vs powerlessness, control vs lack of control, taking active responsibility vs not assuming active responsibility emerge consistently from the investigation. It is instructive that the factors which emerged as important in mythology and anthropological research of reproductive practices were also those related to power and control, and to the prevailing beliefs about how reproduction works. It seems that the issues surrounding fertility management for contemporary women are not so very different from those in ancient times, in European history, and in twentieth century pre-industrial cultures. The women in this study who describe an experience of conscious regulation of fertility via an internal process share these issues with many of their "sisters" who practise conventional methods of birth control, most notably a dissatisfaction with conventional methods of birth control, a valuing of choice, empowerment and control in fertility management, and a clear decision to have no more children.

MONASH

There is a story from the Sufi tradition, the esoteric school of Islam, entitled "The Wayward Princess", which encapsulates the themes of choice, control and empowerment, and also offers a metaphor for interpreting the information which has emerged from this investigation;

A certain king believed that what he had been taught, and what he believed, was right. In many ways he was a just man, but he was one whose ideas were limited. One day he said to his three daughters: "All that I have is yours or will be yours. Through me you obtained your life. It is my will which determines your future, and hence determines your fate." Dutifully, and quite persuaded of the truth of this, two of the girls agreed. The third daughter, however, said: "Although my position demands that I be obedient to the laws, I cannot believe that my fate must always be determined by your opinions."

"We shall see about that," said the king.

He ordered her to be imprisoned in a small cell, where she languished for years. Meanwhile the king and his obedient daughters spent freely of the wealth which would otherwise have been expended on her. The king said to himself: "This girl lies in prison not by her own will, but by mine. This proves, sufficiently for any logical mind, that it is *my* will, not hers which is determining her fate." The people of the country, hearing of their princess's situation, said to one another: "She must have done or said something very wrong for a monarch, with whom we find no fault, to treat his own flesh and blood so." For they had not arrived at the point where they felt the need to dispute the king's assumption of rightness in everything.

From time to time the king visited the girl. Although she was pale and weakened from her imprisonment, she refused to change her attitude. Finally, the king's patience came to an end. "Your continued defiance," he said to her, "will only annoy me further, and seem to weaken my rights, if you stay within my realms. I could kill you; but I am merciful. I

therefore banish you into the wilderness adjoining my territory. This is a wilderness, inhabited only by wild beasts and such eccentric outcasts who cannot survive in our rational society. There you will soon discover whether you can have an existence apart from that of your family; and if you can, whether you prefer it to ours."

His decree was at once obeyed, and she was conveyed to the borders of the kingdom. The princess found herself set loose in a wild land which bore little resemblance to the sheltered surroundings of her upbringing. But soon she learned that a cave would serve for a house, that nuts and fruit came from trees as well as golden plates, that warmth came from the Sun. This wilderness had a climate and a way of existing of its own. After some time she had so ordered her life that she had water from springs, vegetables from the earth, fire from a smouldering tree. "Here," she said to herself, "is a life whose elements belong together, form a completeness, yet neither individually nor collectively do they obey the commands of my father the king."

One day a lost traveller - as it happened a man of great riches and ingenuity - came upon the exiled princess. They fell in love and journeyed back to his country, where they were married. After a space of time, the two decided to return to the wilderness where they built a huge and prosperous city where their wisdom, resources and faith were expressed to their fullest possible extent. The "eccentrics" and other outcasts, many of them thought to be madmen, harmonised completely and usefully with this many-sided life.

The city and its surrounding countryside became renowned throughout the entire world. It was not long before its power and beauty far outshone that of the realm of the princess's father. By the unanimous choice of the inhabitants, the princess and her husband were elected to the joint monarchy of this new and ideal kingdom.

At length the king decided to visit the strange and mysterious place which had sprung up in a wilderness, and which was, he heard, peopled at least in part by those whom he and his like despised. As,

MONASH

with bowed head, he slowly approached the foot of the throne upon which the young couple sat and raised his eyes to meet those whose repute of justice, prosperity and understanding far exceeded his own, he was able to catch the murmured words of his daughter: "You see, Father, every man and woman has his own fate and his own choice." (Idries Shah cited in Perera, 1986).

Whether this story is interpreted from the perspective of intrapsychic dynamics or as a parable about power dynamics in the world, it is a story of choice vs no choice, control vs no control, and empowerment vs disempowerment, the themes which consistently emerge in the story of women's experience of fertility management. Maslow (1970) would have recognised the wayward princess as demonstrating autonomy and resistance to enculturation. She also demonstrated pro-active choice, control and empowerment, the very qualities described by the women practising conscious psychobiological birth control, and which also emerged as important elements in the experience of birth control practices more generally.

Is the story, therefore, a metaphor for the experience of true reproductive autonomy? This is certainly the case for my subjective experience of moving from dependency on conventional methods to the recognition that these methods did not hold absolute rightness for me, to an active search for alternative approaches which would allow me to experience reproductive autonomy. This is also expressed in the statements about dissatisfaction with conventional methods and the clear determination to have no more children which has motivated other women practising conscious

internal regulation of fertility to develop an alternative birth control practice. Like the wayward princess, they said "No" to the prevailing order and "No" to being disadvantaged by their separation from this.

There do, however, seem to be several degrees of involvement with these elements expressed by all the women in the present study. The dissatisfaction with conventional methods of birth control was widespread, with reports of powerlessness and lack of choice common. The difference between those women describing conscious internal regulation of fertility and those continuing to practice a method with which they were not satisfied must, therefore, rest with something other than the experience of dissatisfaction and powerlessness. The next step towards the experience of reproductive autonomy is best described by Factor 1 in Stage 3 of the analysis: a clear statement of the importance of choice, control and empowerment in relation to birth control, but little actual experience of practices which reflect this. In this case, the importance of reproductive autonomy is clearly expressed but here is no indication that it can be achieved in practice.

There is, therefore, still a missing ingredient in the explanation and understanding of the actual practice of conscious psychobiological birth control. The women who experience this have taken the next step of actively seeking an alternative practice which meets the values of choice, control and empowerment. The statement which I have called "ruthlessness" seems to be one component of this next step; the clear and unequivocal decision to have

no more babies was consistently described by the five women in Stage 1. However, this determination to have no more children is not exclusive to women practising internal regulation of fertility, nor is the active search for viable alternative methods of birth control. It seems that these are necessary but not sufficient elements to explain this experience.

The story of the wayward princess seems much more central to a full explanation of the phenomenon of conscious psychobiological birth control. In combination with the strong desire to stop conceiving, there is also the belief that something other than conventional "laws" must be possible. This seems to be what the women practising internal regulation of fertility have in common, and what differentiates them from other women who also report dissatisfaction with conventional methods and who value choice and control, and the desire to find viable alternative practices. There is, therefore, a combination of elements which emerges for women practising conscious psychobiological birth control:

- they are dissatisfied with conventional birth control methods;
- they value choice, control and empowerment;
- they are ruthless in their determination to have no more children;
- they are actively seeking a viable alternative method of birth control;
- *they believe this to be possible outside the existing forms.*

Interestingly, this combination of elements is fundamental to the experience and expression of creativity which has been described as

"effective surprise", "the unexpected that strikes one with wonder or astonishment" (Bruner, 1964, p. 3). Bruner proposes that effective surprise always involves placing things in new perspectives, and that the heuristic that guides one to these new perspectives may well be something akin to Jung's idea of the collective unconscious. Jung (CW, vol. 8), in fact, located the creative matrix of the unconscious in the deep objective psyche, the archetypal layer of experience, proposing that the relationship between the conscious mind and the unconscious is a central factor in the experience of creativity, and that "great artists and other distinguished by creative gifts" experience a "permeability of the partition separating the conscious and unconscious" (p. 70).

This sort of permeability would seem to exist for the women describing internal regulation of fertility, as, for all of them, it is a practice that emerged from within rather than something that was learned from any external source, "a fairly natural understanding and acceptance coming from a fairly unconscious level" or "an internal dialogue with someone or something much bigger and more powerful than myself who was responsible for things like conception and pregnancy" or "an inner process of awareness". It may be unfamiliar to think of such internal responses as "creative", yet they are events which, in this case, have resulted in the creation of a new possibility.

Jung (CW, vol. 8) calls for more serious attention to be paid to the processes emerging from the unconscious, asking us to

MONASH

..... consider that the unconscious, as the totality of all archetypes, is the deposit of all human experience right back to its remotest beginnings. Not, indeed, a dead deposit, a sort of abandoned rubbish-heap, but a living system of reactions and aptitudes that determine the individual's life in invisible ways - all the more effective because invisible. It is not just a gigantic historical prejudice, so to speak, an *a priori* historical condition; it is also the source of the instincts, for the archetypes are simply the forms which the instincts assume. From the living fountain of instinct flows everything that is creative; hence the unconscious is not merely conditioned by history, but it is the very source of the creative impulse (p. 157).

It is, therefore, possible to explain the phenomenon of internal regulation of fertility as a creative impulse arising from "the living fountain of instinct" in response to a conscious commitment to find a new approach. Like the wayward princess, the women practising this had said, "No" to the "laws" and had to find other laws by which to live. They describe subjective experiences which can best be understood through a consideration of the elements of the process of creativity: an ability to consider new perspectives, a permeability between the conscious and unconscious, concentration and commitment, and "a detachment from the forms as they exist" (Bruner, 1964, p. 12). Bruner elaborates this to include not only "a willingness to divorce oneself from the obvious" but also a deep engagement with what is developed to replace it (p. 12).

More generally, psychological investigation of creativity often refers to "the operation of important, unconscious processes" (Busse & Mansfield,

1980), and psychoanalytic theorists such as Ernst Kris (1952) and Lawrence Kubie (1958) stress the importance to the creative process of daydreams and fantasies which access preconscious processes, especially the symbolic. Other psychological theories of creativity (Hadamard, 1945; Koestler, 1964) offer elements similar to the heuristic process described in Chapter 6, incorporating ideas like incubation and illumination which are understood to take place unconsciously. The now famous story of mathematical scientist Henri Poincaré's discovery of Fuschian groups and Fuschian functions involved, in his own words, "sudden illumination, a manifest sign of long unconscious prior work" (Poincaré, 1914). This is reminiscent of the words of a woman describing a consciously intended spontaneous abortion after a confirmed pregnancy, "Once I made the commitment (to abort the pregnancy) that was definitely what I was going to do and it was a very short amount of time, maybe a day or so after that I was up snorkelling and I just, that was it, I just let go and I came up out of the water and I had the bleeding. I was dancing on top of a rock; I was speechless".

This idea of creativity as the process primarily involved in conscious regulation of fertility was hinted at in the review of psychological theory in Chapter 2. Emily Martin's (1987) description of "a process that develops from within and the continuity of this process with the past and the future" offers an accurate statement of the relationship between the conscious and unconscious which women describe in their experience of mind-body fertility management. The English language examples of the metaphor that "creation

is birth" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1981) also support the idea of creativity as the central process in female functions of fertility. The permeability between the conscious and unconscious described by Jung is also consistent with Neumann's (1991) description of the reflective vs unreflective aspects of the transformative function of the feminine and Harding's (1973) delineation of how a previously unconscious, unreflective process can be experienced reflectively and consciously. In fact, analytical psychology proposes that engaging the problem of the opposites not only develops the capacity for conscious reflection of previously unconscious processes, but also releases the creative power in the unconscious (Jung, CW, vol. 7).

The heuristic approach offers a description of several processes which contribute to the sort of permeability between conscious and unconscious which is characteristic of the experience of internal regulation of fertility. Most of the women practising this method describe an internal process which requires many hours of sustained immersion and focused concentration. The immersion is described by one woman as an "inner process of sensing the ovaries and fallopian tubes and uterus" and another as "inner process ..... of going into the state of receiving and experiencing something that relates to the question .....". It seems that some sort of practice involving sustained immersion in internal experience is central to mind-body communication, whether in bio-feedback techniques, healing through imagery, or internal regulation of fertility. This sustained immersion has also been called "indwelling", a practice which allows the essential qualities of an experience to

reveal themselves from the inside out rather than from the outside in. The focusing process used in the final part of the analysis involves this sort of indwelling and can, in fact, be understood to evoke a sort of permeability between conscious and unconscious which can be observed in the images and words of the participants.

The subjective experience of women practising conscious internal regulation of fertility does, therefore, suggest a number of elements which contribute to the phenomenon;

- they are dissatisfied with conventional birth control methods;
- they value choice, control and empowerment in fertility management;
- they are ruthless in their determination to have no more children;
- they are actively seeking a viable alternative method of birth control;
- *they assume this is possible outside the existing forms;*
- *they experience a permeability between the conscious and unconscious;*
- they approach the alternative practice of birth control with concentration and commitment.

It is important to note that it is the *combination* of all these components, and the central importance of the assumption that a viable alternative practice is possible outside of the existing forms, that contributes to understanding the experience of internal regulation of fertility.

The subjective nature of the phenomenon is also evident in the women's stories; this is an experience which emerged for each woman according to the sensations, emotions, images, symbols, and words which made sense to her. Hence the different emphasis on bodily processes and spirituality, for example. As anthropology so clearly demonstrates, there are many different ways to make sense of the world of experience. Research into systems of healing which incorporate mind-body processes has demonstrated that the images, symbols, and ideas that work best are those which have meaning for the person (Achterberg et al., 1994). It is, therefore, not sensible to generalise from the specifics of any one woman's description of her experience of internal regulation of fertility. What has emerged from this study is that each of these women developed her own relationship with the contraceptive process and developed a unique, creative response to this.

If attention in the present study is directed to *what* it is that the women practising psychobiological birth control are doing, the most accessible rational explanation comes from psychobiological research into mind-body communication. From this basis, it is possible to hypothesise that, following the hypnosis research of Erickson (1960) and Rossi (1988), for example, and the mind-body healing work of Achterberg (1985) and others, that techniques could be developed to teach and support the practice of mind-body regulation of fertility. These could follow the principles of mind-body communication explored in previous research and specifically address the biological and biochemical processes of fertility, as well as the subjective imaginal content

and processes of the women involved. My own investigation and clinical experience in this area supports further development of this approach. The idea of teaching mind-body control of fertility certainly focuses attention on *how* the women practising this are doing what it is they do. The theoretical approaches considered in this investigation do offer some indications of how it is that a previously unconscious, automatic experience can become accessible to conscious regulation. It would seem important that these understandings form the basis for further exploration of this area experimentally or clinically. Most important are the sort of internal practices described by Jungian theory and also the heuristic approach which involve attending to the sensations, emotions, images and cognitions as they are subjectively experienced. This emphasis on internally generated processes is also consistent with the idea of reproductive autonomy. The importance of this is evident in the historical, social, and political issues explored in the literature review and is also reflected in the emphasis on choice, control, and empowerment which emerged from the analysis.

There is an obvious extension of this work into the area of infertility. It is interesting that this implication of the current thesis is the one which has been greeted with most enthusiasm when the ideas have been presented to members of the medical profession, as if making babies is considered more important than not making them. While this may sound like a petty comment in the light of the obvious personal suffering involved in experiences of infertility, the relatively greater interest in correcting infertility than in offering true

reproductive autonomy is consistent with the power dynamics explored in Chapters 2 and 3; if women practice reproductive autonomy they take back the power of creation from the prevailing fertility "power brokers", the drug companies, reproductive and genetic engineering organisations, and Western medical science. The debate surrounding this area raises profound ethical and moral issues, and has been engaged much more fully by several authors (Gupta, 1991; Raymond, 1995; Rowland, 1992).

It is, however, Jung's idea of a permeability between the conscious and unconscious that offers what I consider the most important context for interpreting the findings of this investigation. For each of the women practising internal regulation of fertility, the experience developed from the inside-out rather than from the outside-in. This sort of phenomenon has also been described in many traditions where the experience of insight, healing, discovery, and creativity emerge from an internal process, as in the shamanistic tradition, in which one aspect of the shamanistic state of consciousness is "..... the mystic experience that brings knowledge and insight from sources beyond (which) can only happen if the barriers separating self from nonself become fluid, and the imagination reaches out beyond the intellect" (Achterberg, 1985). This idea of different states of consciousness which are more or less accessible depending on certain contexts and practises is a fundamental premise of the shamanistic tradition which originated in Paleolithic times (Halifax, 1982) and which included people currently known as "witch-doctors", "medicine-men", "folk healers", and

"witches". While the practices associated with shamanism were usually the result of many years of intensive training and commitment, there are also reports of spontaneous experiences of healing and discovery which, like the practice of internal regulation of fertility, have arisen in response to dissatisfaction with available approaches and a conviction that an alternative approach must exist (Achterberg, 1985; Cousins, 1983; Zwar, 1985).

Explaining the phenomenon of conscious internal regulation of fertility suggests a relationship between pre-industrial healing practices, Jungian psychology, and the creative process. In his cultural-historical analysis of human consciousness, Jean Gebser (1991) has offered a model for making sense of these interconnections. As mentioned in Chapter 5, he proposed that consciousness has developed through four mutations since the beginning of human existence, and that currently there is an emergence of a new consciousness. This sounds similar to Whitmont's (1982) idea of the "new mythologem" of the archetypal feminine, emerging in response to "the low point of a cultural development that has led us into a deadlock of scientific materialism, religious nihilism and spiritual impoverishment" (p. vii). Gebser, in fact, described the mutations from one consciousness to another as involving just this sort of low point in cultural development, ascribing this to the deficient aspect of the existing structure of consciousness before its transformation into a new consciousness, and to the inherent difficulty of realising an additional or new possibility. One of the significant contributions of Gebser's formulation is the understanding that "each and every one of us is not just the sum or 'result'

of the mutations described, but their embodiment as a whole" (p. 116). What Gebser has argued is that the mutating structures of consciousness are not hierarchical or even strictly developmental in the usual sense, but that each structure remains "present in more or less latent and acute form in each of us" (p. 42).

Gebser (1991) described five structures of consciousness, the fifth representing the new consciousness which is currently emerging. The brief outline which follows suggests the links between Gebser's formulation of consciousness and some of the material in the current work. The *archaic structure* is described as a time of complete "non-differentiation of man and the universe" (p. 43), in which humans experience themselves as part of the whole, with a full identity between inner and outer. The *magical structure* is described as an experience of emergent awareness of nature in which objects, deeds, or events are separated from one another and can be interchanged at will, with consciousness residing in the world rather than in humans themselves, and with parts interchangeable with the whole (this is the world of early shamanistic practices). The *mythical structure* involves the "emergent awareness of the internal world of the soul" (p. 66), leading into the imagination (partly the world of Jungian psychology). The *mental structure*, the structure dominant today, is characterised by directed conceptualisation or discursive thought which "bursts man's protective psychic circle and congruity with the psychic-naturalistic-cosmic-temporal world of polarity and enclosure" (p. 75). In other words, the contemporary structure of consciousness replaces

mythical images with mental abstractions and moves from two-dimensional to three dimensional perception. The proposed new consciousness, the *integral structure*, is understood to emerge when the other structures become transparent and conscious, so that their effects are known and can be balanced. Gebser called this an "intensification of consciousness" (p. 99) which involves "equally living-to-the-full the structures which constitute us" (p. 153).

In Gebser's (1991) model of consciousness it is possible to see the same links suggested by Bion (1962, 1963, 1967) and developed further by Braun (1988); sensation (archaic), emotion (magical), image (mythical), cognition (mental). The women practising conscious internal regulation of fertility describe accessing sensation, emotion, image and mental, rational processes in their experience of birth control. It is possible that they are also accessing the latent structures as described by Gebser (1991). This possibility is consistent with the metaphorical message of the wayward princess who leaves the old structure to discover and develop a new structure which is not governed by the old laws. This 'seeing through' of existing laws is one of the essential ingredients of Gebser's new consciousness.

Gebser (1991) also addressed the place of creativity in his model, proposing that "creativity is something that 'happens' to us, that fully effects or fulfills itself in us" (p. 313) and that "this makes it suspect to any and all rationalists, for creativity reveals the limits of understanding..." (p. 313). He

did, in fact, suggest that creativity is central to the *integral structure* of consciousness, "through creativity preconscious origin becomes the conscious present; it is the most direct, although rarest, process of integration" (p. 313), implying a sort of permeability between conscious and 'preconscious'. He concluded that

there is today a change in man's creative relationship to the "primordial energy" which is pressing toward consciousness, a change with respect to creativity itself which corresponds to the changing and mutating consciousness. ....It is only this state of affairs - the fact that the source of manifestations differs from that proper to the mental structure - which warrants our speaking of truly "new" manifestations for they do not by any means proceed solely from the old consciousness structure and its source (p. 330).

The relevance of this to the present thesis is the suggestion that the new consciousness proposed by Gebser (1991) is characterised by manifestations which may include a cross-section of elements from the other structures (magical, mythical and mental) but which also do not proceed solely from these sources. This suggestion is consistent with the phenomenon of conscious internal regulation of fertility which does have some relationship to the anthropological and mythological elements explored in Chapter 3, and yet appears to have emerged for the women practising it in a way that is not consistent with "the old consciousness structure and its source". This once again emphasises the importance of the cultural-historical context of fertility management and its (unfortunate) role as an indicator of major social, political, and religious changes.

The practice of conscious internal regulation of fertility may, therefore, be one indication of yet another change. It can certainly be seen as one manifestation of the new mythologem of the re-emerging feminine proposed by Whitmont (1982) and explored by numerous others (Bolen, 1984; Eliade, 1965; Gadon, 1989; Johnson, 1989; Neumann, 1991; Stone, 1979; Walker, 1983). Gebser's (1991) model of consciousness has, in fact, suggested that the reemerging feminine may be part of the emerging new consciousness, a "striving for recognition for the *whole* and integral man" (p. 339). He also proposed, in the 1960's, that the discoveries of brain research may indicate some areas of the new developments in consciousness, perhaps prefiguring the developments in psychobiological understanding of mind-body communication. It may, therefore, be that the practice of conscious internal regulation of fertility is not just a remembering of a 'forgotten' historical practice, as has been suggested in earlier chapters, but that it is also one of the indications of a new consciousness which incorporates a "..... living-to-the-full the structures which constitute us" (Gebser, 1991, p. 153).

There are obviously as many questions as answers arising from this thesis, warranting further exploration. This could take the form of a cross-cultural study of the experience of women describing a practice of conscious internal regulation of conception. There is also the potential for a whole field of study of reproductive imagery based on heuristic principles, using processes such as focusing. There is also the possibility for research which addresses the psychobiological components of internal regulation of fertility. This sort of

study would, of course, focus on measuring body processes and isolating the "informational substances" and neurobiological pathways involved. There is, however, the 'invisible' component of intra-psychic processing which is difficult to isolate and which requires of the researchers some of the very qualities which the women themselves demonstrate. Without this sort of involvement, psychobiological research could determine that something is definitely happening and how it is happening in the chemicals of the mind-body system but it could not determine what it is that makes it possible. Bruner (1964) concluded his discussion of the conditions of creativity with the following statement,

Perhaps it is our conceit that there is only one way of understanding a phenomenon. I have urged that just as there is predictive effectiveness, so there is metaphoric effectiveness. Our patience is to be tested as scientists before we are through. For the while, at least, we may have to live with a metaphoric understanding of creativity, hoping that in time we may be able to tame our metaphors to a useful predictiveness (p. 28).

The present thesis has, then, introduced an idea, explored the historical and theoretical basis of the idea, and demonstrated that this idea has phenomenological validity. The most important development from the present study is the evidence, theoretical, historical, and verbal, for the existence of a phenomenon which can be described as conscious internal regulation of conception, a psychobiological method of birth control. The investigation of women's subjective experience of this phenomenon is the beginning of

understanding what it is they are doing and how it is that they are doing it. It is important in this process to remain mindful of the people most directly affected by this idea, the women who describe it, and the women who may learn of its existence through studies such as this. The implications of a psychobiological method of birth control touch upon some of the sacred institutions of our culture, and, therefore, research in this area requires a considered, multi-disciplinary approach. In this way, it is possible to explore this phenomenon at many different levels, producing results of both academic, personal, and cultural-historical value.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Achterberg, J. (1985). Imagery in healing: Shamanism and modern medicine. Boston, MA: Shambala Publications, Inc.
- Achterberg, J. (1990). Woman as healer: A panoramic survey of the healing activities of women from prehistoric times to the present. Boston, MA: Shambala Publications, Inc.
- Achterberg, J., Dossey, B., & Kolkmeier, L. (1994). Rituals of healing: Using your imagination for health and wellness. New York: Bantam Books.
- Abram, D. (1996). The spell of the sensuous: Perception and language in a more-than-human world. New York: Vintage Books.
- Ader, R., Felton, D., & Cohen, N. (1991). Psychoneuroimmunology. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Adler, G. (1966). Studies in analytical psychology. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Aitkenhead, R. P. & Slack, J. M. (1985). Issues in cognitive modelling. London: Erlbaum Associates.
- Anderson, K., Armitage, S., Jack, D., & Wittner, J. (1990). Beginning where we are: Feminist methodology in oral history. In J.M. Nielsen (Ed.), Feminist research methods: Exemplary readings in the social sciences. San Francisco: Westview Press.
- Assagioli, R. (1973). The act of will. Baltimore: Penguin.
- Axelrod, R. (1976). The cognitive maps of political elites. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Bachofen, J. J. (1967). Myth, religion, mother right. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Barker, R. G. (1968). Ecological psychology. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Barnsley, M. (1988). Fractals everywhere. London: Academic Press.
- Bateson, G. (1972). Steps to an ecology of mind: collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Bateson, G. (1978). The pattern which connects. Coevolution Quarterly, 18, 4-15.
- Bateson, G. (1981). Paradigmatic conservatism. In G. Wilder-Mott & J.H. Weakland (Eds.), Rigor & imagination: Essays from the legacy of Gregory Bateson. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R., & Tarule, J. M. (1986). Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice and mind. New York: Basic Books.
- Bennett, J. G. (1973). Gurdjieff: Making a new world. London: Turnstone Books.
- Bernard, J. (1973). My four revolutions: An autobiographical history of the American Sociological Society. American Journal of Sociology, 78, 773-791.
- Bettelheim, B. (1955). Symbolic wounds: Puberty rites and the envious male. New York: Macmillan, Collier Books.
- Billings, E., & Westmore, A. (1980). The Billings method: Controlling fertility without drugs or devices. New York: Random House.

- Bion, W. R. (1962). Learning from experience. London: Heinemann.
- Bion, W. R. (1963). Elements of psychoanalysis. London: Heinemann.
- Bion, W. R. (1967). Second thoughts. New York: Jason Aronson.
- Blankstein, J., Reyes, F., Winter, J., & Fairman, C. (1981). Endorphins and the regulation of the human menstrual cycle. Clinical Endocrinology, 14, (3), 287-294.
- Blum, J. E. (1996). Woman heal thyself: An ancient healing system for contemporary women. Shaftesbury, Dorset, Great Britain: Element Books Limited.
- Blumer, H. (1969). Symbolic interactionism. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Blurton-Jones, N. (1972). Ethnological studies of child behaviour. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bohm, D. (1980). Wholeness and the implicate order. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Bolen, J. S. (1984). Goddesses in everywoman: A new psychology of women. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Bougon, M. G. (1983). Uncovering cognitive maps: The self-Q technique. In G. Morgan (Ed.), Beyond method: Social research strategies. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.
- Bowers, K. (1977). Hypnosis: An informational approach. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 296, 222-237.
- Braun, B. G. (1988). The BASK model of dissociation. Dissociation, 1, 16-23.

- Briffault, R. (1977). The mothers. New York: Atheneum.
- Brown, G. H., & Harris, T. (1978). Social origins of depression: A study of psychiatric disorder in women. London: Tavistock.
- Brown, S. R. (1980). Political subjectivity. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Brown, S. R. (1988). Commentary on "Quantum Theory of Subjectivity," by W. Stephenson. Integrative Psychiatry, 6, 191-193.
- Brown, S. R. (1989). A feeling for the organism: Understanding and interpreting political subjectivity. Operant Subjectivity, 12, 81-97.
- Brown, S. R. (1993). Q methodology and quantum theory: Analogies and realities. Unpublished paper read at a meeting of the International Society for the Scientific Study of Subjectivity, University of Missouri-Columbia, October 22-24, 1992..
- Brown, S. R. (1994). Representative exposure and the clarification of values. Unpublished paper read at a meeting of the Policy Sciences Institute, Yale University School of Law, New Haven, CT, 28-30 October 1994.
- Brown, S. R. (1995). Q methodology as the foundation for a science of subjectivity. Unpublished paper read at the Eleventh International Conference of the International Society for the Scientific Study of Subjectivity, College of Medicine, University of Illinois, Chicago, 12-14 October 1995.
- Brown, S. R. (1996). Q methodology and qualitative research. Qualitative Health Research, 6, 561-567.
- Brown, J. M., & Sime, J. D. (1982). Multidimensional scaling analysis of qualitative data. In E. Shepherd & J.P. Watson (Eds.), Personal meanings. Chichester, Great Britain: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

- Bruner, J. S. (1964). The conditions of creativity. In H.E. Gruber (Ed.), Contemporary approaches to creative thinking. New York: Atherton Press.
- Brunswick, E. (1956). Perception and the representative design of psychological experiments. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Busse, V., & Mansfield, R. S. (1980). Theories of the creative process: A review and a perspective. Journal of Creative Behaviour, 14, pp.91-103/132.
- Charon, J. M. (1979). Symbolic interactionism: An introduction, and interpretation, an integration. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Clarke, I. J., & Cummins, J. T. (1982). The temporal relationship between Gonadotropin-releasing hormone and luteinizing hormone secretion in ovariectomized ewes. Endocrinology, 111, 1737.
- Cleary, T. (1996). Immortal sisters: Secret teachings of Taoist women. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Cook, J. A., & Fonow, M. M. (1990). Knowledge and women's interests: Issues of epistemology and methodology in feminist sociological research. In J.M. Nielsen (Ed.), Feminist research methods: Exemplary readings in the social sciences. San Francisco: Westview Press.
- Cousins, N. (1983). The healing heart. New York; W. W. Norton & Co.
- Crasilneck, H. & Hall, J. (1984). Clinical hypnosis. New York: Grune & Stratton.
- Crowley, W. F., Whitcomb, R. W., Jameson, J. L., Weiss, J., Finkelstein, J. S., & O'Dea, L. S. L. (1991). Neuroendocrine control of human reproduction in the male. Recent Progress in Hormone Research, 47, 27-67.

- Davis, G. (1974). Interception of pregnancy: Post-conceptive fertility control. Sydney, Australia: Angus & Robertson Pty. Ltd.
- Davis, J. (1984). Endorphins. New York: Dial Press.
- de Beauvoir, S. (1952). The second sex. New York: Bantam Books.
- de Castillejo, I. C. (1973). Knowing woman. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Dennis, K. E., & Goldberg, A. P. (1996). Weight control self-efficacy types and transitions affect weight-loss outcomes on obese women. Addictive Behaviors, 21, 103-116.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Devereux, G. (1950). The psychology of feminine genital bleeding. The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, XXXI, 252.
- Dexter, M. R. (1990). Whence the goddesses: A source book. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Douglass, B., & Moustakas, C. (1985). Heuristic enquiry: The internal search to know. Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 25, (3), 39-55.
- Drass, K. (1980). The analysis of qualitative data. Urban Life, 9, 332-353.
- Edelman, G. (1987). Neural Darwinism: The theory of neuronal group selection. New York: Basic Books.
- Edelman, G. (1989). The remembered present: A biological theory of consciousness. New York: Basic Books.
- Edelman, G. (1992). Bright air, brilliant fire: On the matter of mind. New York: Basic Books.

- Eden, C., Jones, S., & Sims, D. (1983). Messing about in problems. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Edinger, E. (1995). The mysterium lectures: A journey through C.G. Jung's *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books.
- Edwards, A. L. (1957). The social desirability variable in personality assessment and research. New York: Dryden.
- Eisler, R. (1988). The chalice and the blade: Our history, our future. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Eisler, R. (1991). The goddess of nature and spirituality: An ecomanifesto. In J. Campbell & C. Musès, In all her names: Explorations of the feminine in divinity. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- Eliade, M. (1954). The myth of the eternal return. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Eliade, M. (1958). Patterns in comparative religion. New York: World Publishing, Meridian Books.
- Eliade, M. (1963). Myth and reality. New York: Harper & Row.
- Eliade, M. (1965). The two and the one. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ellis, D. G. (1981). The epistemology of form. in G. Wilder-Mott & J.H. Weakland (Eds.), Rigor and imagination: Essays from the legacy of Gregory Bateson. New York: Prager Publishers.
- Erickson, M. H. (1960). Psychogenic alteration of menstrual functioning: Three instances. The American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis, 2, 227-231.

- Forgas, J. P. (1979). Multidimensional scaling: A discovery method in social psychology. In G. P. Ginsburg (Ed.), Emerging strategies in social psychological research. Chichester, Great Britain: Wiley.
- Frankel, R. M. (1984). From sentence to sequence: Understanding the medical encounter through microinteractional analysis. Discourse Processes, 7, 135-170.
- Frankel, R. M. (1990). Taking in interviews: A dispreference for patient-initiated questions in physician-patient encounters. In G. Psathas (Ed.), Explorations in provider-patient interactions. Louisville, KY:Humana.
- Frazer, J. G. (1922). The Golden Bough. New York: Macmillan.
- Fromm, E. (1951). The forgotten language. New York: Rinehart & Co.
- Gadon, E. W. (1989). The once and future goddess: A symbol for our time. New York: Harper & Row.
- Gardner, G. B. (1970). Witchcraft today. London: Arrow Books.
- Gebser, J. (1991). The ever present origin. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Gendlin, E. (1978). Focusing. New York: Everest House.
- Gilliespie, G.W. (1986). Using word processor macros for computer assisted qualitative data analysis. Qualitative Sociology, 9, 282-291.
- Gilligan, C. (1979). Woman's place in man's life cycle. Harvard Educational Review, 49, 431-446.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Gimbutas, M. (1982). The goddesses and gods of old Europe: 6500-3500 BC, myths and cult images. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd.
- Gimbutas, M. (1989). The language of the goddess. New York: Harper & Row.
- Gimbutas, M. (1991). The "monstrous venus " of prehistory: Divine creatrix. In J. Campbell & C. Muses (Eds.), In all her names: Explorations of the feminine in divinity. New York: Harper San Francisco.
- Giorgi, A. (1994). A phenomenological perspective on certain qualitative research methods. Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 25, 190-220.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goodenough, W. (1971). Culture, language, and society. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Greer, G. (1985). Sex and destiny: The politics of human fertility. London: Picador.
- Grimwade, J., Fraser, I., & Farrell, E. (1995). The body of knowledge: Everything you need to know about the female cycle. Sydney, Australia: William Heinemann.
- Groome, N., Illingworth, P. J., O'Brien, M., Cooke, I., Ganesan, T. S., Baird, D. T., & McNeilly, A. S. (1994). Detection of dimesic inhibin throughout the human menstrual cycle. Clinical Endocrinology, 40, 717-723.
- Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1989). Fourth generation evaluation. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Guillemin, R. (1978). Peptides in the brain: The new endocrinology of the neuron. Science, 202, 390-402.

- Gupta, J. A. (1991). Women's bodies: The site for the ongoing conquest by reproductive technologies. Issues in Reproductive and genetic Engineering, 4, 93-107.
- Gurdjieff, G.I. (1973). Beelzebub's tales to his grandson: An objectively impartial criticism of the life of man. (3 volumes). New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc.
- Hadamard, J. (1945). The psychology of invention in the mathematical field. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hailfax, J. (1982). Shaman: The wounded healer. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Hall, J. A. (1977). Clinical uses of dreams: Jungian interpretations and enactments. New York: Grune & Stratton.
- Hall, J. A. (1986). The Jungian experience: Analysis and individuation. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books.
- Hammersley, M. (1989). The dilemma of qualitative method: Herbert Blumer and the Chicago tradition. New York: Routledge.
- Handelsman, D. J., Jansen, R. P. S., Boylan, L. M., Spaliviero, J. A., & Turtle, J. R. (1984). Pharmacokinetics of gonadotropin-releasing hormone: comparison of subcutaneous and Intravenous routes. Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism, 59, 739-746.
- Hannah, B. (1981). Encounters with the soul: Active imagination as developed by C.G. Jung. Boston: Sigo Press.
- Harding, M. E. (1973). Psychic energy: Its source and its transformation. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Harding, S., & Hintikka, M. B. (Eds.). (1983). Discovering reality: Feminist perspectives on epistemology, metaphysics, methodology, and philosophy of science. Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel.
- Harris, G. (1948). Steps toward a cell-biological alphabet for elementary forms of learning. In G. Lynch, J. McGaugh, & N. Weinberger (Eds.), Neurobiology of learning and memory. New York: Guilford Press.
- Harris, M. & Ross, E. (1987). Death, sex, and fertility. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hayes, F. J. & Crowley, W. F. Jr. (1998). Gonadotropin pulsations across development. Hormone Research, 49, 163-168,
- Henry, J. (1982). Circulating opioids: Possible physiological roles in central nervous function. Neuroscience & Biobehavioural Reviews, 6, 229-245.
- Highwater, J. (1990). Myth and sexuality. Toronto, Canada: Penguin Books.
- Hillman, J. (1992). Revisioning psychology. New York: Harper Collins.
- Hogbin, I. (1970). The island of menstruating men: Religion in Wogeo, New Guinea. Scranton, PA: Chandler.
- Horney, K. (1967). The flight from womanhood: The masculinity complex in women as viewed by men and by women. In H. Kelman (Ed.), Feminine psychology. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Husserl, E. (1931). Ideas: general introduction to pure phenomenology. New York: The MacMillan Company.
- Husserl, E. (1970). The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Husserl, E. (1977). Cartesian meditations: An introduction to phenomenology. The Hague, Holland: Martinus Nijhoff.

- Jackson, M. & Teague, T. (1978). Mental birth control. Oakland, CA: Lawton-Teague publications.
- Jacob, E. (1987). Traditions of qualitative research: A review. Review of Educational Research, 51, 1-50.
- Jacob, E. (1988). Clarifying qualitative research: A focus on traditions. Educational Researcher, 17, 16-24.
- Jacobsen, E. (1950). The psychoanalytic study of the child. New York: International university Press.
- Jacobsen, T. (1976). The treasures of darkness: a history of Mesopotamian religion. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Johnson, R.A. (1989). She: Understanding feminine psychology. New York: Harper & Row.
- Jong, E. (1979). Creativity vs generativity: The unexplained lie. New Republic, Jan. 13, 27-30.
- Jung, C. G. (1953-1983). The collected works of C.G. Jung, edited by H. Read, M. Fordham, and G. Adler. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953-1978; New York: Pantheon Books, 1953-1960, and Bollingen Foundation, 1961-1967; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967- 1983.
- Jung, C. G.(1953/1966). Two essays on analytical psychology. In Collected Works, Vol. 7, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. G. (1911/1952). Symbols of transformation. In Collected Works, Vol. 5, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. G. (1946/1960). The structure and dynamics of the psyche. In Collected Works, Vol. 8, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Jung, C. G. (1959/1969). Archetypes of the collective unconscious. In Collected Works, Vol. 9, 1. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. G. (1958/1983). Psychology and religion: West and east. In Collected Works, Vol. 11. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. G. (1954/1966). The development of the personality. In Collected Works, Vol. 17. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. G. (1954/1981). The symbolic life. In Collected Works, Vol. 18. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C.G. (1971). Psychological reflections: A new anthology of his writings 1905-1961.(J. Jacobi & R.F.C. Hull, Eds.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C.G. (1974). Dreams. (R.F.C. Hull, Trans.).Princeton, NJ: princeton University Press.
- Karsch, F. J., Bittman, E. L., Foster, D. L., Goodman, R. L., Legan, S. J., & Robinson, J. E. (1984). Neuroendocrine basis of seasonal reproduction. Recent Progress in Hormone Research, 40, 185-232.
- Kalsched, D. (1998). The inner world of trauma: Archetypal defenses of the personal spirit. London: Routledge.
- Kaplan, A. (1964). The conduct of enquiry. San Francisco: Chandler.
- Kelly, G. (1955). The psychology of personal constructs. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Koestler, A. (1964). The act of creation. New York: Macmillan.
- Kramer, S. N. (1979). From the poetry of Sumer: Creation, glorification, adoration. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

UNIVERSITY

- Kramer, H., & Sprenger, J. (1928). Malleus Malefi Carum. Great Britain: John Rodher.
- Kris, E. (1952). Psychoanalytic explorations in art. New York: International University Press.
- Kubie, L. S. (1958). Neurotic distortion of the creative process. New York: Noonday Press.
- Kuhn, T. (1962). The structure of scientific revolutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kvale, S. (1994). Ten standard objections to qualitative research interviews. Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 25, 147-173.
- Labov, W., & Fanshel, D. (1977). Therapeutic discourse: Psychotherapy as conversation. New York: Academic Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1981). The metaphorical structure of the human conceptual system. In D. A. Norman (Ed.), Perspectives on cognitive science. First annual meeting of the cognitive science society. Logola, CA: Ablex Publishing Corp.
- Langland, E. & Gove, W. (Eds.). (1981). A feminist perspective in the academy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Larousse encyclopaedia of mythology (1968). London: Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd.
- Laughlin, C. D., McManus, J., & d'Aquili, E. G. (1990). Brain, symbol & experience: Toward a neurophenomenology of human consciousness. Boston, MA: New Science Library.
- Lawlor, R. (1991). Voices of the first day: Awakening the Aboriginal dreamtime. Vermont, VT: Inner Traditions International, Ltd.

H3111111

- Leach, R. E., Moghissi, K. S., Randolph, J. F., Reame, N. E., Blacker, C. M., Ginsburg, K. A. & Diamond, M. P. (1997). Intensive hormone monitoring in women with unexplained infertility: evidence fro subtle abnormalities suggestive of diminished ovarian reserve. Fertility and Sterility, 68, 413-420.
- Lechniak, D., Cieslak, D., & Sosnowski, J. (1998). Morphology and developmental potential of bovine parthenotes after spontaneous activation in vitro. Journal of applied Genetics, 39, 193-198.
- Lederer, W. (1968). The fear of women. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc.
- Lee, T. (1989). Women as demons: The male perception of women through time and space. London: The women's Press Ltd.
- Lerner, G. (1986). The creation of patriarchy. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Levine, J. E., Pau, K. Y. F., Ramirez, V. D., & Jackson, G. L. (1982). Simultaneous measurement of Luteinizing hormone releasing hormone and luteinizing hormone release in unanaesthetized ovariectomized sheep. Endocrinology, 111, 1449-1455.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1967). Structural anthropology. Garden City, NY: Anchor.
- Lewin, K. (1936). Principles of topological psychology. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lewis, C.S. (1984). Till we have faces: A myth retold. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. London: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1990). Judging the quality of case study reports. Qualitative studies in education, 3, 53-59.

- Loi, P., Ledda, S., Fulka, J. Jr., Cappai, P., & Moor, R. M. (1998). Development of parthenogenetic and cloned ovine embryos: effect of activation protocols. Biology of Reproduction, 58, 1177-1187.
- Maccoby, E., & Jacklin, C. (1974). The psychology of sex differences. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- MacLean, P. D. (1969). The paranoid streak in man. In A. Koestler & J.R. Smythies, Beyond reductionism. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Malinowski, B. (1929). The sexual life of savages. New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World.
- Malinowski, B. (1974). Magic, science and religion and other essays. Norwich, Great Britain: Fletcher & Son Ltd.
- Marshall, J. C., Dalkin, A. C., Haislender, D. J., Paul, S. J., Ortolano, G. A., & Kelch, R. P. (1991). Gonadotropin-releasing hormone pulses: Regulators of gonadotropin synthesis and ovulatory cycles. Recent Progress in Hormone Research, 47, 155-187.
- Márquez, G. G. (1970). One hundred years of solitude. (G. Rabassa, trans.) London: Cape.
- Martin, E. (1987). The woman in the body: A cultural analysis of reproduction. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). Motivation and personality. New York: Harper & Row.
- McIntosh, J. (1994). The approach of phenomenological psychology: origins and the emergence of a new paradigm. Unpublished manuscript, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia.
- Mead, M. (1970). The art and technology of field work. In R. Narroll & R. Cohen (Eds.), A handbook of method in cultural anthropology. Garden City, NY: Natural History.

- Meador, B. D. (1992). Uncursing the dark: Treasures from the underworld. Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications.
- Meltzer, D. (1981). Birth: An anthology of ancient texts, songs, prayers, and stories. San Francisco: North Point Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). Phenomenology of perception. (C. Smith, Trans.) London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964). The primacy of perception. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968). The visible and the invisible. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Mortley, R. (1981). Womanhood: the feminine in ancient Hellenism, Gnosticism, Christianity, and Islam. Sydney, Australia: Delacroix.
- Moustakas, C. (1990). Heuristic research: Design, methodology, and applications. New York: Sage Publications.
- Naydler, J. (1996). Temple of the cosmos: The ancient Egyptian experience of the sacred. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions.
- Needham, J. (1934). A history of embryology. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Neumann, E. (1991). The great mother. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Nhat Hanh, T. (1987). The miracle of mindfulness: A manual on meditation. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Nimura, S., & Asami, T. (1997). A histochemical study of the steroid metabolism in parthenogenetic mouse blastocysts. Journal of Reproduction and Development, 43, 251-256.

- Nofziger, M. (1976). A cooperative method of natural birth control. Summertown, TN: The Book Publishing Company.
- Packer, M. J. (1985). Hermeneutic enquiry in the study of human conduct. American Psychologist, 40, 1081-1093.
- Packer, M. J. & Addison, R. B. (1989a). Evaluating an interpretive account. In M. J. Packer & R. B. Addison (Eds.), Entering the circle: Hermeneutic investigation in psychology. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Packer, M. J. & Addison, R. B. (1989b). Introduction. In M. J. Packer & R. B. Addison (Eds.), Entering the circle: Hermeneutic investigation in psychology. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Pagelow, M. D. (1979). Research on woman battering. In J. Fleming (Ed.), Stopping wife abuse. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.
- Paget, M. A. (1983). Experience and knowledge. Human Studies, 6, 67-90.
- Paige, K. E., & Paige, J. M. (with Fuller, L., & Magnus, E.) (1981). The politics of reproductive ritual. Los Angeles: The University of California Press.
- Papez, J. (1937). A proposed mechanism of emotion. Archives of Neurology & Physiology, 38, 725- 744.
- Parvati, J. (1978). Hygieia: A woman's herbal. Monroe, UT: Freestone Innerprizes.
- Patton, M. (1980). Qualitative evaluation methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Perera, S. B. (1986). The scapegoat complex: toward a mythology of shadow and guilt. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books.
- Perls, F., Hefferline, R., & Goodman, P. (1951). Gestalt therapy. New York: Bantam.

- Pert, C. B. (1997). Molecules of emotion: Why you feel the way you feel. New York: Scribner.
- Peterson, G. (1984). Birthing normally: A personal growth approach to childbirth. Berkeley, CA: Mindbody Press.
- Piliavin, J. A. (1976). On feminine self-presentation in groups. In J. I. Roberts (Ed.), Beyond intellectual sexism. New York: McKay.
- Podolevsky, A., & McCarthy, C. (1983). Topical sorting: A technique for computer assisted qualitative analysis. American Anthropologist, 84,4.
- Poincaré, H. (1914). Science and method. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). Narrative knowing and humane sciences. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour. London: Sage.
- Raymond, J. G. (1995). Women as wombs: reproductive technologies and the battle over women's freedom. North Melbourne, Australia: Spinifex Press.
- Richards, L., & Richards, T. J. (1987). Qualitative data analysis: Can computers do it? Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology, 23, 23-35.
- Richards, L. & Richards, T. J. (1991). Computing in qualitative analysis: A healthy development? Qualitative Health Research, 1:2, 243-262.
- Riddle, J. M. (1992). Contraception and abortion from the ancient world to the renaissance. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rockeach, M. (1973). The nature of human values. New York: Free Press.

- Rosenblum, A. (1976). The natural birth control book. Philadelphia, PA: Aquarian Research Foundation.
- Rossi, E. L. (1988). The psychobiology of mind-body healing: New concepts of therapeutic hypnosis. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Rowland, R. (1992). Living laboratories: Women and reproductive technologies. Sydney, Australia: Pan Macmillan.
- Sadker, M. P., & Sadker, D. M. (1982). Sex equity handbook for schools. New York: Longman
- Sadker, M. P. & Sadker, D. M. (1985) Sexism in the schoolroom of the 80's. Psychology Today, March, 54-57.
- Salk, J. (1983). Anatomy of reality. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sanday, P. R. (1979). The ethnographic paradigm(s). Administrative Science Quarterly, 24, 527-538.
- Sapir, E. (1949). The status of linguistics as a science. In D. G. Mandelbaum (Ed.), Selected writings of Edward Sapir in language, culture, and personality. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Scharrer, E., & Scharrer, B. (1940). Secretory cells within the hypothalamus. Research Publications of the Association of Nervous and Mental Diseases. New York: Hafner.
- Schlegloff, E. A. (1987). Analyzing single episodes of interaction: An exercise in conversation analysis. Social Psychology Quarterly, 50, 101-114.
- Schreiber, J. (1974). Cross-cultural study of menstrual perceptions. World Health Organisation task force report on the acceptability of fertility regulating methods. AFT, 3, 6.
- Seifer, D. B. & Lambert-Messerlian, G. (1997). Predictive value of serum inhibin-B for ART outcome? Fertility and Sterility, 68, 947-948.

- Selye, H. (1976\1936). The stress of life. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Shlain, L. (1998). The alphabet versus the goddess: The conflict between word and image. New York: Viking Penguin.
- Shuttle, P., & Redgrove, P. (1989). The wise wound: Menstruation & everywoman. London: Paladin Books.
- Singh, R., Ahsan, M. M., & Datta, R. K. (1997). Artificial parthenogenesis in the silkworm *Bombyx mori* L. Indian Journal of Sericulture, 36, 87-91.
- Sjoo, M., & Mor, B. (1987). The great cosmic mother: Rediscovering the religion of the earth. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Smith, M.B. (1950). The phenomenological approach in personality theory: Some critical remarks. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 45, 516-522
- Snyder, S. (1980). Brain peptides as neurotransmitters. Science, 209, 976-983.
- Spiegelberg, H. (1960). The phenomenological movement: A historical introduction. The Hague, Holland: Nijhoff.
- Spence, B., & Gillen, F. J. (1904). The northern tribes of Central Australia. London: Macmillan & Co.
- Spradley, J.S. (1979). The ethnographic interview. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Spratt, D. I., Crowley, W. F., Butler, J. P., Hoffman, A. R., Conn, P. M., & Badger, T. M. (1985). Pituitary luteinizing hormone responses to intravenous and subcutaneous administration of gonadotropin-releasing hormone in men. Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism, 61, 890-895.

- Starhawk (1989). The spiral dance: A rebirth of the ancient religion of the great goddess. San Francisco: Harper.
- Stephenson, W. (1953). The study of behaviour: Q-technique and its methodology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stevens, A. (1997). The two million-year-old self. New York: Fromm International.
- Stevens, J. O. (1971). Awareness: exploring experimenting experiencing. Moab, UT: Real People Press.
- Stewart, J., Krebs, W., & Kaczender, E. (1971). State-dependent learning produced with steroids. Nature, 216, 1233-1234.
- Stiles, W. B. (1993). Quality control in qualitative research. Clinical Psychology Review, 13, 593-618.
- Stone, M. (1978). When god was a woman. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Stone, M. (1979). Ancient mirrors of womanhood: A treasury of goddess and heroine lore from around the world. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory, procedures and techniques. London: Sage.
- Taggard, G. (1967). The life and mind of Emily Dickinson. New York: Cooper Square Publishers.
- Thompson, S. (1955-1958). Motif-index of folk-literature. A classification of narrative elements in folktales, ballads, myths, fables, mediaeval romances, exempla, fabliaux, jest books, and local legends. 6 volumes. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

- Thompson, W. I. (1981). The time falling bodies take to light: Mythology, sexuality and the origins of culture. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Tiffany, S. W. & Adams, K. J. (1985). The wild woman: An inquiry into the anthropology of an idea. Vermont, VT: Schenkman Books Inc.
- Tinbergen, N. (1951). The study of instinct. London: Oxford University Press.
- Tinterow, M. (1970). Foundations of hypnosis. Springfield, Illinois: C.C. Thomas.
- Von Franz, M. L. (1980). Alchemy: An introduction to the symbolism and the psychology. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books.
- Waitzkin, H. (1990). On studying the discourse of medical encounters: A critique of quantitative and qualitative methods and a proposal for a reasonable compromise. Medial Care, 28, 473-488.
- Walker, B.G. (1983). The woman's encyclopaedia of myths and secrets. New York: Harper & Row.
- Walker, B.G. (1990). Women's rituals: a source book. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Warnke, G. (1987). Gadamer: Hermeneutics, tradition and reason. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Watts, A. (1968). Myth and ritual in christianity. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Weideger, P. (1976). Menstruation and menopause. New York: Knopf.
- Wertheim, M. (1999). The pearly gates of cyberspace: A history of space from Dante to the internet. Sydney, Australia: Doubleday.

- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1983). Small insults: A study of interruptions in cross-sex conversations between unacquainted persons. In B. Thorne, C. Kramarae, & N. Henley (Eds.), Language, gender, and society. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Westbrook, L. (1994). Qualitative research methods: A review of major stages, data analysis techniques, and quality controls. Library and Information Science Research, 16, 241-254.
- Whitmont, E. C. (1982). Return of the goddess. Guernsey, Channel Islands, Great Britain: The Guernsey Press Co., Ltd.
- Whitmont, E. C. (1991). The symbolic quest: Basic concepts of analytical psychology. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Whyte, W. F. (1984). Learning from the field: A guide from experience. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Wilder-Mott, G., & Weakland, J. H. (1981). Rigor and imagination: Essays from the legacy of Gregory Bateson. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Wolinsky, S. (1991). Trances people live: Healing approaches in quantum psychology. Falls Village, CT: The Bramble Company.
- Wolkstein, D. & Kramer, S. N. (1983). Inanna. Queen of heaven and earth: Her stories and hymns from Sumer. New York: Harper & Row.
- Woodman, M. (1985). The pregnant virgin: A process of psychological transformation. Canada, Toronto: Inner City Books.
- Woodman, M. (1993). Leaving my father's house: A journey to conscious femininity. London: Rider.

Woolfolk, R. L., Sass, L. A., & Messer, S. B. (1988). Introduction to hermeneutics. In S. B. Messer, L. A. Sass, & R. L. Woolfolk (Eds.), Hermeneutics and psychological theory: Interpretive perspectives on personality, psychotherapy, and psychopathology. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Woolger, J.B. & Woolger, R.J. (1990). The goddess within: A guide to the eternal myths that shape women's lives. London: Rider.

Zwar, D. (1985). Doctor ahead of his time: the life of psychiatrist Dr Ainslie Meares. Richmond, Australia: Greenhouse Publications.

Zweig, C. (1990). To be a woman: The birth of the conscious feminine. Los Angeles: Jeremy T. Tartcher Inc.

## APPENDIX A

Journal entries, dreams, images, and commentary for the period of the  
research project.

There are three sorts of material presented here under the headings:

Dream (with the date);

Journal entry (with the date);

Commentary (associations with the material which has been written as this section was compiled; linking the material to the stage of the thesis).

Personal material: 12/5/90 to 27/2/99

**Dream: 12/5/90**

My 14 year old daughter is pierced by pellets; 3 marks on her chest which is young, pre-pubescent, flat. She has been shot. She is lying prone in a room with windows. Outside the windows a fire is burning, closer and closer. There is a sense of urgency. I am ringing for an ambulance, for help. The female voice (European?) At the other end of the phone line is confused. And not responding quickly enough. My daughter is complaining of pain and my sense of the danger she is in is great. She cannot be moved.

The fire is moving closer and will burn us. A car outside ignites. The sense of urgency increases. Eventually the ambulance arrives. They say that she is not seriously hurt, that there are only marks on the surface of her skin. She is distressed, claiming deeper hurt. I am sure they do not understand the seriousness of the situation. My dilemma is whether to allow them to move her

even though they do not understand the seriousness or whether to refuse to let them touch her.

The fire burns closer.

**Commentary:**

Early stage of deciding to explore the experience of psycho-biological birth control, prior to engaging the thesis. Just beginning to read books about the feminine principle in history and mythology.

**Journal entry: 4/6/90.**

A theme of reconnecting with an inner, imperative demand which seems to contradict the rational external reality. It is as though the ancient Feminine has become lost within the rational Masculine approach to life; she can no longer be called upon to heal, leaving aspects of the Feminine bereft. Something new is called for.

**Dream: 8/9/90.**

I am in a large house with many women and children. Somehow I have killed a man inadvertently by my way of being. I regret this and a woman is coming who can bring him back to life. I remember that I have done this twice before. This time the man is a friend of mine. My partner is not going to be sleeping at this house and I will miss him. I am bewildered by the events and am wanting to talk with the woman who saved the man. Her name is Angie. I am writing on a piece of paper the man has with him as he is leaving.

**Journal entry: 8/9/90.**

Active imagination with "Angie" who tells me that she can only bring back life because she has no desire.

**Journal entry: 8/10/90.**

There is some fear that I won't bring the creativity to birth, like the scene in Marquez's (1970) novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, where the baby is carried away by ants because the father is not attending. I must attend now and not be distracted. It is important.

**Commentary:**

Something is being asked of me in relation to the exploration of the birth control practice but can I do what is asked? What desire? Is it necessary to bring the man back to life or is it the feminine to which I must attend?

**Dream: 20/11/90.**

Visiting a house in the mountains which run down but habitable. The forest and mountains are beautiful. As I am walking up the mountain with my three daughters, we are seeing a hooded figure at the top of the hill. He appears faceless. We are sensing evil and are going back down. The house belongs to a male friend who has lived there with his mother. He is asking what we sense and when I am telling him, he says, "No wonder my mother's so crazy; we've lived here since 1978 or 1977." Then a realisation that the surrounding mountains are so high that there is no need to keep digging ( a voice is saying "Stop excavating") as all we have to do is make a lip in the top of the ridge and whatever it is will run over the edge to us. I am wondering about the hooded man, the evil. If we make sure it comes in small amounts we will be safe.

**Commentary:**

The hooded man looks like a priest; the doctrine of the Catholic church was central in the destruction of "women's ways".

**Dream: 10/3/91.**

I am being brought food by Italian relatives, at least two people, a man and a woman. I am expected to eat and I am quite happy to do so. There is some sense of water somewhere.

**Journal entry: 10/3/91.**

Collective stream; drowning in the collective or eating of it and being nourished. Two messages: a warning of being overwhelmed by forces and going mad and reassurance that all I require is there and available to be channelled safely in small amounts. There is nourishment in the collective stream.

**Dream: 15/3/91.**

I am walking alone through a familiar landscape from my childhood which then changes to unfamiliar land with a high cliff. I can see a long way but cannot be seen. I am walking with my daughter (18 years old) through a small village with a narrow winding street which is too narrow for cars. I have been here before; in the dream world it is the village in the valley below the place where I grew up and was walking earlier (a familiar dream place). We are shopping and find a container of flour that is perfect for what we want. It is a large plastic container like a baby's bath with a lid. The flour contains special ingredients. As we are walking we decide it is too heavy to carry up the hill to the "Main Road" where I proudly tell the man in the shop that I live. He offers to keep it for us so that I can come back with the car to collect it. We are pleased and feel cared for by his attention and service and decide to come back in the car.

**Journal entry: 15/3/91.**

My difficulty in bringing that which is prepared and packaged and perfect for my purposes from the valley to the "Main Road" - from within to the

outer world. I need a "vehicle" to do this, and there is a benevolent, supportive, male figure offering to help with this. So I must go out into the world and get the vehicle to bring this stuff I need up from inside - the work on the thesis, I imagine.

**Commentary:**

First year of engaging the project as a Master's thesis. Descent to a place like my ancestors village (southern Italy); not accessible by car at first: not accessible via my means of moving in the world e.g. study? academic psychology? But then some agreement is reached and I can return with the car.

**Dream: 23/5/91.**

A beautiful, big goldfish with flowing fins and tail is living in a drain under the step of a door. I am thinking that this is not the right place to care for such a fish. The fish is swimming along the drain along the wall edge, and swims down a grill leading down. I am thinking that this is very bad for the fish and when it reappears it looks ill, lying on its side and moving slowly. I am thinking that it is dead but it revives or seems to. Then I realise that it has died and I am feeling deep regret and perhaps guilt as I should have cared for it better. A baby dragon is emerging from the fish's body and I am promising to care for this well.

**Journal entry: 23/5/91.**

Perhaps the fish is not dead, but transformed: instinct transformed into higher consciousness, "exalted soul".

**Journal entry: 31/5/91.**

Fire as consciousness which we steal from the Gods - and which is not truly theirs until we do steal it - yet we must suffer for stealing it, even though

we redeem the Gods by the act. A paradox I cannot quite grasp; something about the inevitable suffering for doing exactly what is required for oneSelf and for God. Maybe not Nature? Opus Contra Naturam - maybe it is that She will have her way somehow even though one moves towards consciousness and must pay dues to Her?

Paradox: to love and worship Her even while working against Her to reflect God in developing consciousness.

Soul            & Spirit  
 Nature         & God  
 Feminine      & Masculine  
 Unconscious & Consciousness  
 Dark           & Light

Perhaps it is that we must pay our dues to Her before we reflect God.

Soul	Spirit
wolf	eagle
under	above
immersion	transcendence
dark	light
deep	high
warm	cool
water	air

I love Her - and fear Her - yet I cannot be all Hers. I stand at the shrine - dark, moist, rich with water, earth, growth - and look up to the vaulted sky and stars, so clear and light and beckoning. I love Her - in many ways I am Her - yet I cannot be Hers alone. I also reach for the stars, the heavens. And I grieve for the betrayal of my birthright; like the novels about the passing of the Goddess at the time of Christianity. Yet there must be bridges between the dark, moist places and the stars.

I fear Her rage, I fear Her dark face, Her vengeance. Yet I cannot deny the pull upwards (against Gravity as well as Nature!). I want to serve Her, yet I will

not be devoured. Her demons terrify me, yet I cannot give in. Nor can I deny Her; She is so much a part of me (or me so much a part of Her!). I can feel Gaia's rage with Uranus and her vengeance through Saturn.

**Commentary.**

The engagement with the material in the literature I am reading for the thesis stirs these questions about Nature and God, Feminine and Masculine. I am reminded of C.S. Lewis's (1984) rewriting of the myth of Psyche and Eros in the novel, "Till We Have Faces".

**Journal entry: 1/6/91.**

She feels present. It is as if She wants me to free my Self and yet will test me; threaten me with loss/failure and then say, "Yes, I want those who can see beyond the form to the essence. It is not Goddess worship; it is not only homage to the Mother; it is not only reverence for the Feminine; it is the struggle to free one's Self from all form - I will only assist by providing the material; - I cannot help you other than that - in fact, I must hinder your path, although I need you to succeed - it frees me also. I applaud you when you win through".

The dream (8/9/90) with Angie (Angel = messenger of the Gods: Hermes in disguise?) Saying that she can only bring the man back to life because she is free of desire.

And so, I must write of this. It is not simple as so many of the books about Goddess/Feminine suggest. She is more complex/ more demanding than that. She does not want our egos/images in service - it is deeper than that. We must be free to serve her fully. I still cannot quite grasp the paradox of her capacity/intention to free and destroy. It is as though there is an intention within an intention, truly a secret /hidden teaching for those who find their way through the maze. Can I, therefore, reveal it. The sense is that I

must, although it can probably only be heard by those who can hear already; its own protection.

**Dream: 16/8/91.**

I am talking with a man who is a teacher of some sort. There is another woman with me. Although she is not distinct. We are talking about his clothes. I am feeling the quality of the fabric in his trousers and am commenting on it. He is saying something about buying quality so it lasts. He is suggesting that we travel together. As I am walking off I am saying that I have already had two offers from friends to travel to Europe and the Middle east, and that these friends are both men. The teacher man and I are now sitting in a restaurant. He hands me the menu which is in French and is asking me if I can manage it. I say, "Of course, I'm good at this". Then I am looking bewildered. He is laughing. I am smiling. The waiter is showing me the English translation of the main words (like a French-English dictionary). I immediately start making connections with the French descriptions of the meals and understanding them. The waiter appeared instantly and apparently without being called for.

**Commentary.**

This dream coincides with reading a book on transcendental phenomenology in French, using a French-English dictionary borrowed from my father. The translation took me some time and was disappointing as it did not yield anything revelatory. My studies of mythology (Ancient Greece and Sumerian: European and Middle Eastern!) were, however, offering many insights.

**Dream: 17/9/91.**

I am walking with some other people through a large shopping complex. There is a train line passing through the middle of the shop. A long train is

stopped in the shop. I am trying to jump right through the open doors of the train to get to the other side. I am not wanting to walk on the train as it is belongs to the foreign owned shop I do not want to visit. Somehow, we all end up inside the train as it is moving on. The doors close and we are trapped in an empty carriage/spare engine half way along the train. We do have luggage with us but it was intended for another journey. We are not sure where this train is going or how long it is until the next stop. It is passing through several stops without stopping. Eventually I manage to get into the cabin part of the carriage and find a telephone. I am picking it up and a faint crackly voice at the other end is familiar. Someone has been looking for us and will now tell the train to stop and let us off. The train is stopping at a place between stations that I recognise as "Belair". Apparently strange things have been happening along the way that alerted the driver that something unusual was happening. Apparently it was nothing that we had done directly; only our presence where we shouldn't have been.

The people coming to get us are amazed that I climbed into the cabin. When they are asking me how, I am saying that I climbed outside to get in through a window, although I am not sure that this is true. There are many tools hanging under the window ledge in the cabin and the man who is rescuing us is very interested in the tools.

#### **Commentary.**

My association with a large shopping centre is with collective consensus values. Despite my best intentions to avoid these, I am "taken for a ride" by a train (a vehicle which one-tracked!).

#### **Dream: 29/10/91.**

I am working in a therapy session with two women. My Grandfather is in the room observing. As the work is moving into a very painful area for one of the women, I am continuing to confront the dynamics of the process by

saying, "So, it's to and fro, up and down, back and forth .....". She is sobbing. My grandfather is groaning and clutching his heart. We are carrying him out of the room. His skin is very grey. The rest of the family, Grandmother, mother, and sister, are gathering round and an ambulance is called. I am thinking that this is definitely not my fault, not my responsibility; he didn't have to be in there if he didn't want to. Now my father is sitting in a chair holding his chest. He has been having signs that he is about to have a heart attack. The pain is intensifying and he is saying, "If this keeps up it will end with me dead". I am thinking that it may not need to but he seems resigned. The other women are running around not doing anything definite or particularly useful.

**Commentary:**

The work is developing in such a way at this stage that my conditioning via the education system and the culture is being challenged; the masculine figures in my psyche are subsiding or being weakened through my work. The iteration in the session (up and down, back and forth) is like the cybernetic principles I have been exploring in Gregory Bateson's work.

**Dream: 31/10/91.**

I am walking through a large house with a man. He is precisely retracing his steps and actions from a previous time to prove his innocence (maybe murder, but the wrongdoing is not clear). He is opening and closing doors exactly as in the previous situation. It seems to take a long time. We go upstairs and this continues. I am waiting by the bedroom door. There is a small window above the door and the man makes a point of saying that it would have been disastrous if he'd opened that the previous time. I am getting tired and impatient and tell him to hurry up. He goes into a side room to go through the motions of closing the window. What comes out is not him but a "demon" woman with hair flying. She comes straight for my face. "I" am now a man. I am terrified and overwhelmed.

**Dream: 5/1/92.**

I am running home from school to my grandparent's house. There is some sense of being pursued and a sense of relief at arriving "home". As I am walking in the front door of the house I hear a sliding door opening slowly. I am approaching it and am pushing it open fully. My other is standing in the doorway. She is deathly white with sunken, hollow eyes and wrinkled, collapsed skin. She is saying, "Nanny committed murder". I am thinking that she is going to say "suicide" as Nana has recently died and we are grieving her death. I am not surprised about her committing murder as I already "know" this from a dream I had when I was ten.

**Commentary.**

The relationship between the personal and the collective appears again in this dream. While this could be a statement about the personal relationship between my mother and her mother, it could also be a statement about the collective mother line and the archetypal feminine as it is present in our lives today. Is she vengeful, murderously enraged?

**Journal entry: 5/1/92.**

The women (in my family) all tried to hold off the descent - by not really feeling the loss/grief/pain. I am attracted to the illusion of it even while knowing the descent and the value of it.

**Dream: 6/1/92.**

I am at my grandparent's house, walking around the garden with my mother and another woman. I am showing the woman all the familiar places and saying how it has all changed. The garden is unkempt and dead in places, very neglected. There is a sense of loss/grief/mourning at the changes and the neglect. I am feeling my cheek for tears.

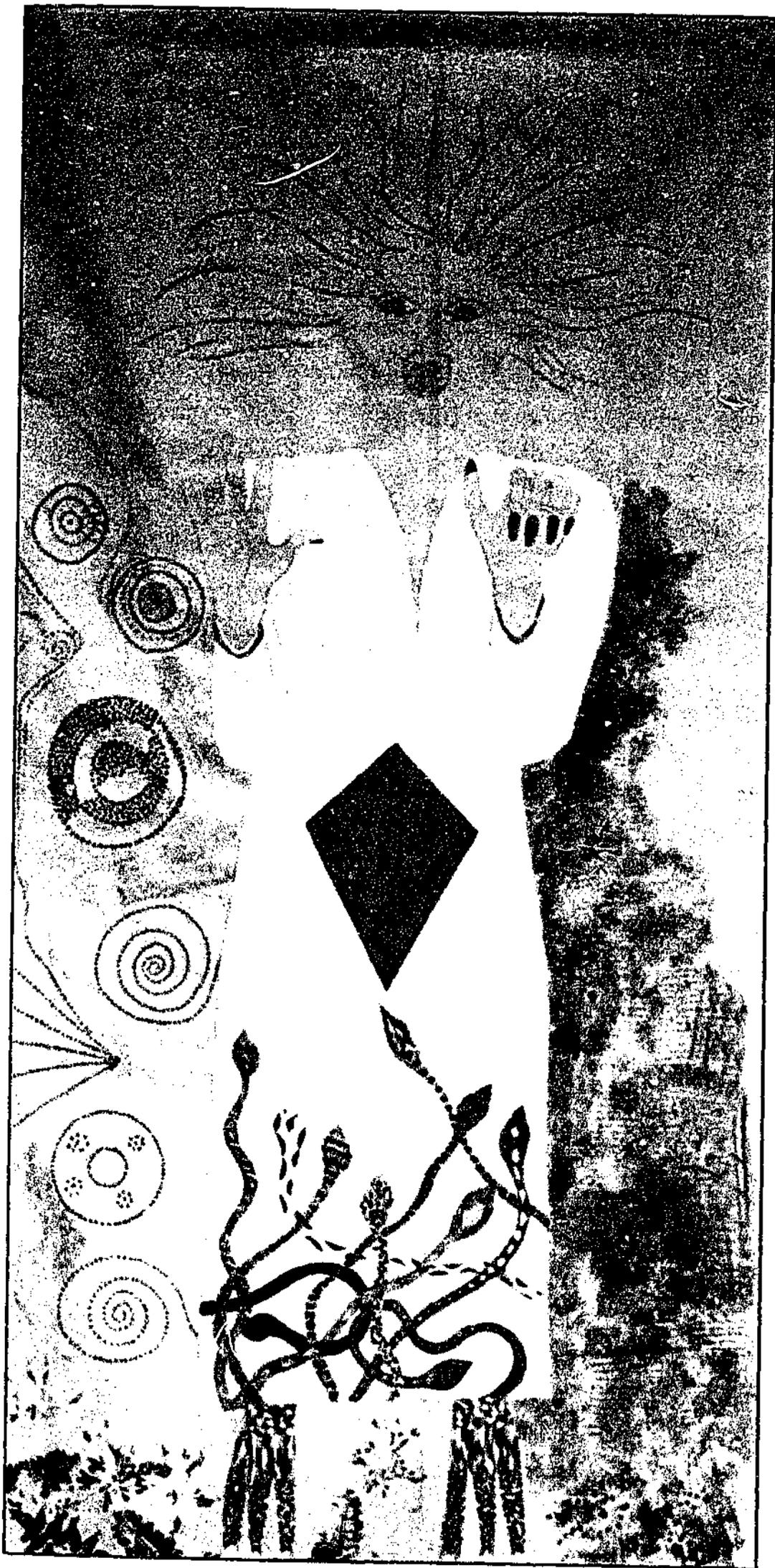
**Dream: 16/1/92.**

Waking up screaming, heart thumping. Awareness of a woman's face coming up close to mine. Terror. No idea who she is or the context; just overwhelming terror.

**Commentary.**

She would come out of the night screaming, flying into my face, nails raking my arms. Who was she? Some creature from my nightmares? Some unresolved rage or grief? Something wanting attention, no doubt. But how to attend to such an attack waking me from sleep into terror? What would I suggest to a client dreaming these dreams? Try drawing the face that flies at you in the night. The image of this dream figure emerged onto paper over a period of twelve months and the identification of the figure as "Lilith" and the explication of this followed the completion of the image.

Image: "Lilith". 1991 to 1992.



**Journal entry: 15/3/92.**

Going to "Mother" (file name), the thesis material on the computer and all the words I have been writing are gone! Nothing, no access, gone! I know I have it on paper, yet the access to that space of writing/ changing words/joining is so much a part of it. Shocking to find it gone. Abandonment, death, shock, bewilderment, doubt. Should I be writing this? Is my focus clear enough? Whom does it serve? It is reawakening awareness of possibilities, unlocking and challenging the dependence on science and rational knowledge. Maybe this should only be taught word of mouth, as part of an ongoing process of learning? Why do I want to "prove" it? Will this work really bring anything to the world that is of value? I want to hide away that which is really of value but unacceptable; I don't want it taken and made commonplace. So I'll hide it (make it inaccessible!). But then I lose it, too. It seems it must be shared, brought into the light, exposure and reduction risked. I am afraid. I want to hide (hide it away).

**Dream: 26/3/92.**

A scene in which a man is driving a car into deep water. A woman in the passenger seat is acting affectionate and seductive. The man is responding. They are getting out of the car on the bottom of the water. He is hitting her across the forehead with a thin stick and then strangling her with a cord. He is leaving her for dead and getting back in the car. Even though it is under water, the car is starting straight away and the man is driving off looking maniacally happy.

**Journal entry: 29/3/92.**

Computer failed completely today.

**Journal entry: Active imagination dialogue with woman from dream  
(26/3/92):**

"I am tormented and often act angry and wild. There are energies in me which make me act ways that others don't like, that make relationship difficult. I know that men find me hard to be with. I'm not like most women, I'm darker, wilder, more intense, more aggressive. Men don't like me. I probably should go and live on my own. The energy that moves in me is dark, wild, aggressive, not soft, motherly, agreeable, cooperative. I am that which flies at you in your dreams, screaming, scratching, wild, hair flying. I want you to love me. You take the attitude of the men who don't like me, you hold me off. I want to be seen, acknowledged, accepted, loved."

Like the harpies. My mind holds me off from knowing her more deeply. I don't know how. What is it about our service (to that which is greater than) given freely and consciously that is so valuable? What do we produce/ make possible/ add to when we work to be fully present to Her force?

**Journal entry: 31/3/92.**

Not just Athena, but all the goddesses of Greece are defined in terms of their relationship with men:

Hera as wife

Athena as father's daughter

Aphrodite as responsive beloved

Artemis who shuns men

All seen from the perspective of male psychology. The flying, shrieking female form must know this, calling me beyond these manifestations to a deeper knowing.

**Dream: 6/5/92.**

I am attending a workshop with people from all over the world. Part of the process is an excursion, like a school excursion. I am walking through a

wooded area. The scene on the left is a painted backdrop, although it is so well painted that the closer I look, the more depth I can see, with trees visible a long way away. I am wanting to spend time here just sitting. We are walking down to a gate where the male teachers are standing on an old cart pretending to whip everyone as they are walking through. It is a simulated scene from the Inquisition and they are saying, "Bow to Our Lady". I am saying, "I bow to the lady of the forest", and they are whipping me. We are walking to a building where one of the teachers is "baptising" each person with warm water. I am standing back and after everyone is baptised, the teacher is asking me to come forward. I am saying, "No, I am not a Christian", and am walking past him. We are now forming discussion groups of four and three of the others are hurrying over to discuss my response.

**Dream: 20/7/92.**

A very large snake is trying to bite/eat me. I am wrestling with it and it is slipping away as its skin comes off. Now it is eating my child and once again I am grappling with it and stopping it. It is demanding something (someone) to eat or it will eat a child. I am finding one of my servants for it to eat, a young woman who has no family.

**Commentary:**

Amazing resonance with the "Kunapipi" myth of the Arunta people of central Australia described by Bettelheim in *Symbolic Wounds* (1955). Very vivid dreaming with a real sense of having to choose.

**Journal entry: 28/7/92.**

Reading Sjo and Mor, "The Great Cosmic Mother". Thoughts about the dreams of the past year; perhaps more about the emerging work of my writing than about personal unconscious issues. Collective issues. The work

has a life of its own and is beginning to emerge into the world. There is a way in which I have kept it quiet, almost as though I don't want anyone to notice I'm doing it. "They" may try to stop me if they realise what it's really about. So I hide the true relevance from myself as well, as though I'm not fully awake to the implications of the work. If I were, I'd be too overwhelmed to continue. Sjoon and Mor are explicit about the importance of reproductive control; very affirming for many levels of my knowing, yet also frightening. Shhh. Let's just sneak this idea/knowing into existence, get it under their guard before "they" know it, then "they" can't stop us. "They" must be centuries of conditioning. I suppose. Interesting and intense responses when the full meaning of my work begins to register.

Computer down again! Time out to really think about the issues. Masculine/feminine: it seems that feminist writers do not fully explore the dark face of the Mother, that which holds all in unconsciousness. It is not as simple as just doing it; there is something to be reclaimed from patriarchy and something to be won from the unconscious feminine.

**Journal entry: 2/8/92.**

A personal myth based on the idea of beginning with a personal awareness and setting it another time and place, allowing the story to tell itself:

Once there was a golden child, glowing with light, loving, creative, relating openly and fully to the world. One day this child was wandering in the bush, enjoying the smells of moist eucalyptus and the colours of the bush. So many shades of green, with the vividness of the occasional wild flower. There was a sense of wonder and endlessness.

Suddenly a serpent slithered out onto the path and, before the child could move, he was wrapped tight in the serpent's coils. This was no

ordinary serpent; this was a very old, ancient power of evil. The serpent took the child to his cave and bound him in the darkest corner so he could see no light. Then he began to reach into the child's mind and heart and soul and to entrance him with evil, to replace joy with fear, love with hate, light with darkness, trust with betrayal, openness with possessiveness.

And he nearly succeeded. Except for a small spark of light which would not go out. No matter what the serpent did, he could not extinguish that last glimmer of light. He could have killed the child, but that would have been an admission of defeat because death comes to all sooner or later, and it is not the same as turning light to dark. Sometimes in his anger, he was tempted to kill the child, but pride prevented him. He wanted to kill that last spark of light; it became an obsession.

Sometimes, not very often, someone who carried some of the light would pass by the cave, on the path where it went back into the hillside, or on the path far below in the valley, and the child would stir in his trance of darkness. The serpent was ever watchful for this, and would strike at the passer-by, inflicting fear and injury, or even death if the venom went deep enough. Nothing was going to come between him and his submission of the light in the child, which had come to represent total dominion over all light.

Occasionally there chanced a wanderer who was immune to the serpent's poison and then the child stirred almost awake, and his agony was horrible. For he could, in those moments, realise his peril and the utter helplessness of his entrapment. He could not free himself; all he could do was remain true to that last spark of light. He knew then, for those moments, that something must come from outside to free him. But he could never imagine what. And as the wanderers passed by, and the child sank back into the trance of darkness, he felt the

overwhelming terror and rage of his helplessness.

How could anyone even know of his plight, let alone help him? All of those who passed by saw only a snake, vicious and deadly to be sure, but, nevertheless, only a snake, protecting its territory. Occasionally one or two wanderers caught a hint of evil, but passed it off with a shudder. How could the child ever be free?

What keeps him entrapped?

Serpent: evil binding trance, greed, lust for power, obsession;

Passers-by: ignorance, naivete, not seeing/sensing, lack of consciousness;

His own determination to preserve the light.

One day, a woman came walking along the top path. A beautiful woman, wearing clothing of many layers of fine, transparent fabric. She moved so silently that the child did not stir and the serpent did not notice her coming.

She stood to the side of the mouth of the cave and as her fine, flowing garment moved with the breeze, the serpent noticed the gentle lifting and falling of the veils in the corner of his eye, and became entranced, his mind drifting back through time following the flowing tail of a golden fish.

And, as the veils of illusion closed around the serpent, the trance lifted from the child, who came slowly back from the deep, dark place where he had dwelt for so long. He awakened to darkness, and to quiet, and to the absence of menace.

It took some time for him to find the balance in that spaciousness. All he had known for a long time, all that was familiar, was suddenly

absent, lifted off. Eventually, he dared to move. And, in moving, he remembered wandering in the bush, remembered being trapped by the serpent, and remembered the eternity entranced in his coils.

He moved past the serpent into the day, blinking in the light which pulsed as if alive. He noticed the lifelessness of the serpent and the movement of veils and, for a moment, glimpsed their meaning. That glimpse lent depth and texture to the light in which the child moved. From time to time, he chanced to see the movement of veils, reminding him of illusion and, from his own entrancement he knew the power of darkness.

As the years went by, he would walk along the path, savouring the play of light on the leaves, and remembering a long ago dream of a serpent and a cave. One day, he found his way back to the cave. There was a large coiled rock to one side of the entrance, and no sound from within. Finding courage, he ventured inside and was surprised to find it not very deep and relieved to find it completely deserted. As he left the cave, he glimpsed movement in the corner of his eye. He turned and there, caught in the branch of a bush, was a gossamer fine piece of fabric, a plaything of the breeze. Yet, how it enchanted him and awoke in him an unnameable yearning.

**Commentary:**

My experience of this story is that it emerged autonomously so that rather than me writing it, it wrote itself. There are many layers of meaning in it for me. The coils of the serpent can be like the constraints of conditioned thinking, binding me to prescribed ways of perceiving and understanding. In the dream of the serpent, it has to eat something and I have to save my baby (the thesis) from it. It is a constant effort to consider the information from different perspectives and not to become trapped in a deterministic mode at

one moment or a transcendent mode of thinking and processing at another.  
And to follow the elusive leads which free me from the coils of the serpent!

There is also Jung's commentary on the symbolism of the serpent in *Symbols of Transformation* (CW, vol. 5), where he describes the brooding quality of introversion which is like the snake coiled around its own egg and threatening life with its poisonous bite. In this sense, the motif of the serpent could also serve as a reminder to bring the work into the world and not coil around it endlessly.

**Dream: 6/9/92.**

I am wired up to a man in a wheelchair so that the constant contact is helping with this healing. I am available for him like for a baby. I am constantly responsible for attending to this man's needs for attention and nurturing so he can get better. We are walking and I am pushing the wheelchair. I am generally admired for my altruism and devotion to healing by carrying these wounded men so they can recover.

I am in a building that is under construction. I am putting the man down (or the wiring that connects us). He appears to be sleeping but I am wondering if he is dead and am aware of my responsibility to him. I am talking with others about something technical and I am the only one who is understanding what is being discussed.

**Commentary:**

Putting down the responsibility for preserving the life of the masculine principle. Perhaps I can write the thesis from what I know rather than to maintain something that is dying anyway.

**Dream: 11/9/92.**

I am visiting an old woman/man relative on an island. There are

swimmers in the distance. We are settling down in the cabin to have dinner. He/she is sorting out old "real" drinking glasses from modern "false" ones, but during the evening these get mixed up. I know that he/she will die tomorrow and the glasses won't get sorted again. Everyone will be leaving so that he/she dies alone. Now I am with the person who is clearly a woman and I have stayed to be with her as she is dying. I have also sorted out the glasses, old from new. It wasn't so hard.

**Journal entry: 11/9/92.**

Active imagination: I am in a large house and am entering a room where a beautiful woman, glowing with light, is waiting to embrace me. A small part of me is entering this room while the rest is being kept outside by guards who serve a tall dark man. He has power over me and can keep me from truly being embraced by the feminine principle. He is dark, powerful, demanding, controlling, threatening, ruthless, determined, capable of cruelty. He has me trapped. How do I break free?

**Image: Three headed masculine figure and faint feminine figure. Pencil and paper. 11/9/92.**



**Dream: 20/11/92.**

I am going to a house where I have things to do. My husband is ringing up to ask why I am taking so long. I am saying that both my grandmothers have asked me to do things for them. They are living in different parts of the house. I am happy to do what my grandmothers want.

**Dream: 30/12/92.**

I am wanting to build or develop something and there are people, determined to stop me by finding "loopholes" in the law to stop the plan. I keep

getting around these and then they are finding more.

**Dream: 2/9/93.**

I am pregnant and, although it is not time, the baby is being born. I am feeling the baby's head with my hand. The baby is born and I am catching her on my own. She is quite small. I am proud of delivering her alone and she is happy. She is climbing all over me like a little creature. She is sucking and being nourished. A dark, dangerous man is coming in. He kills or damages people. I am asking him not to kill us as I have just done this wonderful thing of delivering this baby alone. He is considering this and is agreeing but is saying that he must wound me to show the world that he's not weak or soft. He is slashing my leg with his knife. I wish he hadn't done that but am glad that my baby and I are safe.

**Commentary:**

Even when the "baby" is birthed, there are still forces to be aware of. The dangerous man is like a version of the serpent/three-headed figure energy but there seems to be enough conscious (?) relationship to allow negotiating.

**Dream: 24/1/94.**

I am living in a very large old house which is being renovated by a group of young designers and architects. They have painted some huge old statues white. The statues are of figures which are round and solid and large, like Earth Mother statues. I am upset and angry and am telling the people responsible whenever I see them. I am yelling and talking strongly to them and encountering much resistance. Eventually I am talking with one of the women who is agreeing with me and who decides to restore the statues to the original dark brown colour.

**Commentary:**

Strong emotional involvement with the material about the loss of the feminine mysteries. Restoring the images may be one of the things the "grandmothers" want me to do.

**Dream: 19/6/94.**

I am travelling with my family. We are stopping at a motel for the night. We are being made welcome as we know someone here. In the middle of the night I am awake taking care of the two cats we have with us. I am watching an amazing cloud formation through the window. There are blue shapes with black and white outlines in an orange/red cloud. It is moving very fast across the sky. I am running for my camera and trying to take pictures through the windows but it's too dirty. I am running outside. The cloud is moving so fast it's breaking up. I am taking pictures. The cloud is going around a group of trees. I am running around the trees and am seeing the last bits of the cloud dissolve into a beautiful tree of blossom. A voice says, "The tree came into blossom; No! The blossom came into the tree". I am talking with an old woman about the cloud and she is telling me about the shapes in it and about also seeing faces in the tree.

**Dream: 9/7/94.**

I am living in a large house in a large country town. I am in church, sitting in the front with other women. We are talking with the priest who is lying on the floor. We are asking for an all women's day at the church. He is not wanting this but is not saying this directly. He is finally suggesting that the request will be put to the board for a decision. I am becoming more and more frustrated and angry with him. Finally, I am realising that he knows that the board will not approve it and that this is what he is wanting. I am angrily yelling at him. Some of the other women are very shocked.

I am now discussing this with the church board, a group of elders. They are not agreeing and I am arguing strongly and intensely. The other women are approving and supporting. Finally, I am yelling abuse at the group and one young woman is disapproving and saying that "No-one has respect for our elders any more".

I am at home and the children are playing. I am worrying about some sort of retaliation from the community for me abusing the priest and elders. I am checking the windows. Someone has already closed them and I am feeling protected. The children are playing inside and I am feeling good.

**Commentary:**

I am reminded of my Italian grandmother's tradition early this century of meeting in the church on Christmas Eve with only other women to do "women's business", which was probably much more akin to pagan nature magic than Christian practice.

**Dream: 6/11/94.**

A male student is announcing that he has decided not to finish his medical degree because during his research he has found that the human race will suffer a major catastrophe. Someone is saying that medical skills will be needed if this happens and that he should finish anyway. He is saying that it doesn't really matter as to alleviate suffering on a personal level will be meaningless in the context of the overall event. He is also developing a healing skill or technique that he will be using anyway.

**Dream: 15/1/95.**

I am at a meeting to honour a woman who has died. I am expecting to be anonymous but her family and friends are discussing plans for regular meetings and are considering me a significant person in her life. I am invited to be guest speaker at the first of the commemorative meetings and then to

run a series of workshops to demonstrate the work she and I did together. Although I have only a vague memory of this woman, I can clearly see how to run the workshops and present the information. I am excited about doing it. I am not mentioning how little I remember the woman although I am protesting that my influence in her life was not as great as they believe.

**Commentary:**

Realising the difficulty of developing conscious relationship with the ancient mysteries. I can mourn their loss but can I interpret them meaningfully now "she" is dead? The totality of Descartes' victory of mind over body is becoming very apparent as I search for a suitable methodology and attempt to stay true to the understandings that have emerged from the literature review.

**Dream: 9/4/95.**

I am finding my way to a large, old house where I am meeting with a group of people. I am talking with a woman and telling her that my grandmother has died.

**Commentary:**

Has the fear generated by the material led me away from the relationship with the archetypal feminine which has informed the work? Is there something else which has "killed" my grandmother?

**Dream: 30/4/95.**

A dangerously mad woman is being kept under guard. There are soldiers guarding her. The strength of the troop of soldiers is being questioned and they are gathering their horses for a march past to demonstrate their strength. It is becoming obvious that this is not a big troop and that some of the members are young children. There is concern that the woman is not being guarded well enough as the troop cannot contain her. She is living in a

separate building.

**Dream: 25/5/95.**

I am having a massage from a woman. A group of men are gathered behind a screen at the far end of the room. I am careful that they don't see me. Some other people are arriving and it is becoming clear that there is not much privacy here. The massage table is now a young woman's bed with new, crispy white linen. Another young woman is moving onto the bed and she is leaving blood stains from menstruation. The woman who owns the bed is very angry and is screaming that she can't use the linen. I am taking the bedding to clean it.

**Commentary:**

Ambivalence about coming into immediate contact with the "wise blood". Considering the meaning of the menstrual taboos in various cultures: power taken from the feminine ?

**Dream: 7/6/95.**

I am entering a large, old house. I am looking for something but need help with this. A man is picking me up on his shoulders so I can reach a cupboard high up on the wall. I find the things. Even though they are not quite right, this is no longer important. There is a man talking about the spirits who haunt the house.

**Dream: 5/8/95.**

I am walking by a river. I am moving closer to see it better and I drop what I am carrying. It is being swept away by the current which is very strong. I am chasing it. I am walking along the river again and it is suddenly becoming quite calm. One person is saying that this happens at 12.30 every day, the

river changes. If I dropped my things now, I could easily retrieve them.

**Commentary:**

Perhaps there are ways and times to enter the collective stream that are less dangerous or difficult, less likely to sweep me, or my belongings, away.

**Dream: 20/8/95.**

I am entering a large room which is divided into segments; one side is for Jewish worship and the other for Catholic. There are only markings on the floor to divide the space. A man is presiding over the room. I am standing on the Jewish section. I am moving to the Christian section and now I am stepping to one side to consider the experience and the choice between the two. This is what visitors to this place do. A dangerous dog is barking outside. It is hunting us and now it is rushing in to attack. I am scared. I am finding the right tone of voice to tell the dog to "Sit" and "Go home". The dog is leaving.

**Commentary:**

Learning to manage the energies evoked by this exploration of comparative philosophies.

**Dream: 23/10/95.**

I am staying at an old hotel on a small island. I am here to research something. I have written a paper on this in the past and it is still relevant. The Americans are about to test an atomic bomb near the hotel. We are all being pushed inside by very aggressive Americans. The bomb is exploding and the top structure of the hotel is collapsing. It is ruined. This is similar to a collapse in the arches in the basement centuries ago.

**Dream: 1/12/95.**

I am visiting an old couple in their home. I am wanting to ask them about something in their life experience that is about a mystery. They are talking with me but they are not revealing much. There is a younger man who is a priest but he has no information to offer. There is a plant hanging from the ceiling which confirms the existence of the mystery. This plant can be found nowhere else in the world and it has been with these people since the days of the mystery.

**Commentary:**

The "moly", a sacred plant in mythology which gives access to mysteries. Edinger (1995) wrote about moly:

Remember, Jung tells us that the Mercurialis plant is symbolically equivalent to moly. I have a lot of material amplifying moly ..... The ancients were very attracted to this image. You know whenever an important symbolic image emerges, it has a magnet-like function that activates the unconscious and encourages speculative fantasy. That's what the ancients did with the image of moly. It was equated with the divine Logos and things like that, but the importance for us will be that it unites opposites: although its root is black, its flower is milky white" (p. 294).

Hard to find? Something about the passing of time in both these dreams; making sense of what is happening across time?

**Dream: 23/2/96.**

I am walking through a property to visit a very large, old house. It was once grand and beautiful. I am with my family and my parents. We are exploring the mansion. There are many rooms on many different levels. There has been a fire and many of the rooms are burned. There is one room which

is intact. I am saying that we could live here. It is the kitchen with large wood burning fires. I am feeling regret that this place is neglected. As we are leaving I realise that my grandmother is here and I am walking back in to see her. I am going through a gate and she is standing with other people. She is much more powerful and sophisticated than I remember her. I am greeting her warmly. She is pleased to see me, despite herself. We are talking when a man tells me it is time to leave. My father is not pleased with me for seeing her. I am realising that she has accumulated great power and wealth which she keeps hidden away. She has pretended to be an ignorant peasant woman but is really sophisticated and powerful.

**Commentary:**

Reconnection with the archetypal feminine on different terms. She is now showing herself as powerful rather than disenfranchised (or I am now able to perceive her this way).

**Journal entry: 10/3/96.**

An image emerging from focusing on body sense: two golden eyes emerging from darkness, in a face even blacker. Just there, undeniably there. Not an optical effect of light and shadow. Here now, given form in paper, crayon, gold and black cloth.

**Commentary:**

When I look at matter, matter looks back at me. "When we look inward, the "other" looks at us too, but with a strange faraway eye. The unconscious begins to unveil its secret play of fantasy" (Commentary to *The Inward Gaze* by Marie-Louise von Franz; cited in Hannah, 1981). Reminds me of Merleau-Ponty (1962; 1964; 1968) and the idea of "body subject", witnessing within our participation in lived experience.

**Dream: 13/3/96.**

I am being instructed as to the right way to attend to artefacts (old statues etc). I am instructing some students about this.

**Dream: 4/6/96.**

I am visiting my grandparents. I am walking through a huge basement/foundation area of a building complex. My grandfather is showing me around. He is renovating the whole area and there are signs of digging and some construction. Nothing is finished. I am noticing excavated areas in which large containers have been buried with only their tops showing. This is reminding me of other construction sites where something illegal is happening. I am realising that the two places are connected and that my grandfather is also involved with the others. I also know that this means there are bodies of babies buried in the foundations. My mother and grandmother are looking at a list of sixteen of my mother's pregnancies in which the babies have died. My grandmother is recognising the immense sadness in this experience.

**Commentary:**

A time of refining methodology and learning how to think about data in a way that respects subjective experience. Adopting and rejecting a number of approaches (perhaps not quite 16?). How many "babies" (creative works? ideas?) have died and been buried by the "mothers"?

**Dream: 11/6/96.**

I am eating vegetables which my grandmother has grown. I am nourished by these vegetables. I am wondering how it is that I am experiencing her so strongly now as she has been dead for over a year. I am also wondering how she could have grown these vegetables I am eating. I am wondering if she could have planted the seeds and someone else tended them and harvested them. I am also wondering about how the vegetables

have come to me as my father would not have been involved.

**Commentary:**

Finding ways to approach the data that honours the nature of the subject. Reading material and learning of ways to be with this that are nourishing. The "mother" line offering nourishment from beyond the grave: collective forces.

**Dream: 26/2/97.**

In the desert in an adobe building something is being packed and unpacked, arranged into a space and then rearranged. Also words being formed and unformed. A man knows something about the Holy Grail and is trying to find the words to describe what he knows.

**Dream: 9/4/97.**

A large black fish is jumping out of its tank and I am frantically trying to get it back in. This is happening over and over. Each time the fish is becoming smaller until eventually it is a small fish.

**Commentary:**

Trouble in my relationship with instinct again? It is easy to move away from instinctual experience and wisdom into intellectual enquiry. The transcendental phenomenology which was the initial basis for the research design is obviously not suited to an exploration of mind-body process. The whole idea of this approach to birth control is not to approach it from the outside in, as an observer, but to engage it as an embodied experience.

**Dream: 4/6/97.**

I am stranded on an island. Other people are sailing their yacht for

help. It will take three days to get help. After they have left I am noticing that the water supply is very low. Will there be enough? Some concern about goldfish in the water supply.

**Commentary:**

Three days is a mythological time of being stranded before renewal. Time out to address the relationship between mind and matter. This has to be clear for the thesis to reflect the true meaning of this area.

**Dream: 5/7/97.**

I am making my way to a place which is at the centre of a large complex of buildings and courtyard, like a maze or a labyrinth. A sense of a journey.

**Dream: 26/7/97.**

I am being shown around a huge cathedral by a priest. He is saying that he rents the space for Goddess workshops and that he leaves his picture of the Devil as theirs is too "super-fish-ial".

**Dream: 2/9/97.**

I am anticipating the birth of my baby. Now I am seeing her being held by someone. She is smiling and happy. I am surprised that she is already born. How can I have labour if she is born?

**Commentary:**

It seems that some of the necessary resolution has been reached so that the "baby" can be born. Still the internal debate between instinct and spirit.

**Dream: 6/1/98.**

I am living in a large old house. The landlady is renting the upstairs area to someone else and is asking me to move into the bottom section of the house. I am packing and moving although the bottom section is not as well finished as the top. I am suddenly realising that I own the house and so I do not have to move. The landlady cannot tell me to leave. I am noticing that the downstairs areas is being renovated but I still want to claim what is mine.

**Dream: 9/1/98.**

The landlady is selling her assets and the buyers are presuming that my house is a part of this. For a moment I am believing that this is true and then I realise that I own the house and that the people buying her assets have nothing to do with this house.

**Commentary:**

Claiming the space that is mine in this domain. The writing up has had an apologetic tone as I attempt to justify my mythopoetic approach. This is not necessary and, in fact, detracts from the work.

**Dream: 13/2/98.**

A man is approaching me and offering me some part in some work he is doing teaching Shakespeare. I am telling him that I am very familiar with Shakespeare from when I was a child and my mother recited it to me often.

**Commentary:**

Using the language to express layers of meaning and complex ideas. Once again a legacy from "mother".

**Dream: 23/4/98.**

I have been travelling for a long time and having many adventures in remote places. I am now at home in my parent's house. I am wanting to sleep. My father is intruding into the room and claiming that everything in it is his. I am leaving

**Journal entry: 23/4/98.**

The threat from "father" leaves me unable to relax into the feminine. The Greek myths present the stories from the perspective of the "fathers" as in Persephone "having" to be abducted etc. The Goddesses are defined in relation to the masculine, not in their own right. Inanna descends herself; she is not abducted.

**Commentary:**

Still struggling with how to understand the material without a patriarchal bias. I am not totally convinced by some feminist arguments about research yet I recognise that I have been educated in a model that is not suited to the work I am now doing.

**Dream: 4/8/98.**

Something is being made and there is much discussion about the details of the making. A voice suddenly is saying, "It's between you and the maker."

**Dream: 11/11/98.**

I am leaving my parent's house as something has happened which I am not happy with.

**Dream: 5/2/99.**

I am travelling on a bus with other people. A very large woman is having trouble climbing on board the bus. Others are attempting to help her but are not being effective. I am helping her with a strong lift to climb aboard.

**Commentary:**

The statues in the dream from 24/1/94 were in need of repair and renovation. Now I am helping the large woman (ancient earth mother/goddess image) who is boarding the bus for the journey.

**Dream: 27/2/99.**

I am having a baby. The labour is strong and I am managing it well. A baby boy is born. I am having another baby. It is a shorter labour and a baby girl is being born. I am up and about quickly and am going home the same day.

**Commentary:**

Marion Woodman (1993), in the introduction to her book, *Leaving my father's house*, wrote about the women with whom she has worked to produce the book,

Synchronistically, these .....women, unknown to each other, propelled by an inner impetus, began to write their soul stories. I was close to each. I suffered with them, while at the same time holding an objective point of view. I helped bring to consciousness the individual stories.....I saw with my physical eyes, perceived with my inner eye, and empathised with the new life that was desperate to be born (p.7).

The words of my supervisor on the first meeting to discuss this project, "There are many different ways to have a baby".

So, the babies, a boy and a girl, are born and all is well.

APPENDIX B

Interview transcripts: Stage One

**Interview A: AGED 50; 3 CHILDREN.**

Internal regulation on an unconscious or a conscious level? I think with me it was the start of a relationship where each of us had three children and neither of us could contemplate wanting an extra one, and like you I had found the previous methods unsatisfactory and I had reached the end of my options and I was 40 . So I said, well let's see what happens. The man I was with said, "Let's choose not to have any more children". So, I said, "Sure", and I continued to go to Family Planning, a counselling service for women's reproductive health and each time I went they said, "What form of contraception are you using?" and I laughingly said that we choose not to incarnate any more souls. They looked at me as though I was a bit peculiar and said that my body looked ready for action and quite fertile. At every check up they've asked me this and I say that we have chosen not to have any more children. There has not been any conception and everything else appears to be acting like clockwork. No change apparent in any way except no children. This is a much more distant level, a thought perception rather than physical, meeting of bits of protein. Very much out there in the nether regions. I'm sure there is something there that is possible for people to connect with.

Some tribal societies use the idea of power, spirit, ancestral worship to contracept and sometimes those of us in the Western worlds lose sight of such simple things. I was probably not surprised about this, just a fairly natural understanding and acceptance coming from a fairly unconscious level.

**Interview B: AGED 40; 3 CHILDREN.**

I have contracepted for 13 years now by telling my uterus "No" to implantation. At first this involved an inner process of sensing the ovaries and fallopian tubes and uterus and saying "No baby" while imagining the lining falling away and shedding completely. I did this every time I had intercourse and when I expected my period and sometimes in between just to be sure. Now I only do this consciously once or twice a year.

Sexual intercourse is not limited at all with this. There's never been any idea of

not having sex at a particular time. I decided after the birth of my last child that I definitely did not want any more children, and all the contraceptive techniques hadn't worked for me previously. I had never wanted to use the pill because of the side-effects of chemicals on the body; I made one baby when a condom broke; another baby when a diaphragm leaked; and a third just after I had an IUD removed because of severe cramping and continuous bleeding. We had tried the rhythm method but found that we couldn't maintain the focus and commit ourselves to abstinence at the right times. I decided there must be a better way. So, I suppose it came out of disillusionment for me; nothing else worked. I had no faith left in the medical profession! I had also been practising natural healing which required taking back responsibility for the body, and overcoming fears and dependencies on experts. I became sure that there must be a way of doing it for contraception. I studied how it all happened physically and decided I couldn't stop fertilisation; it just seemed impossible. But I did feel some sense of control over implantation. Then it seemed clear that it was totally up to me as a woman whether or not I conceived. I could let the fertilised egg implant or not; offer it a home or not. It was irrelevant whether I had unprotected sex; the decision was totally mine. Very empowering. There was once early on when I had feelings as though I might have conceived; emotions mainly of vulnerability and wanting nurturing. I decided to have a menstrual regulation. This brings on a period even before a pregnancy test can be done. This was like a really strong statement to my womb: I won't have a baby again no matter what; I am prepared to be ruthless. This was important to the process I think. Being able to be completely ruthless. And knowing clearly that the want was for no baby. This followed a third pregnancy where I consciously explored why I was having babies; the emotional and psychological needs being met by having a baby. For me this had something to do with unmet nurturing and dependency needs (or perhaps unsatisfied and unsatisfiable). Knowing these made the process of conception more conscious. Well, there's another sense which is more difficult to talk about. There's a sense of a feminine principle, sort of like the Goddess principle which has become so popular now. A feminine power which was part of this process for me; she had to cooperate with it for it to be successful. It was like an internal dialogue with someone or something much bigger and more powerful than myself who was somehow responsible for things like conception and pregnancy and birth and maybe even death. She seemed to demand procreation from me (and other women), and it was as if

my relationship with her had to change in order not to conceive. Sometimes this was frightening, awesome; at other times it was just what was happening. Well, it's not really like hearing a voice; more like thoughts in the back of the mind or senses of something. Sort of a knowing. Sounds vague, doesn't it? It is hard to describe. It's a bit like what Jung called active imagination, or maybe what some people call praying ..although I don't think of it as that. More like a conversation with someone who doesn't have to listen to me but who is. Maybe that's what talking to the body is like anyway?. It also seems that there has been a trade-off or agreement for me to use my energies in other ways other than making babies. Like writing and studying and doing things that seem useful in the world. Maybe that's imagination. I'm not sure, although it seems very real at the time.

Interview C: AGED 38; 4 CHILDREN.

When we are really doing things we are just doing them, and then people ask us and we say "Well, I just do it". Giving women that chance not to use the pill and get pregnant. It depended on where I've been living, the state I've been at. I've practised the Billings method there for about 9 months. I practised no sex for quite a well, it just depended on the levels of fear, desperation, frustration. It depended on no one thing yet I inevitably had a plan where on the third year, there were three years between each child; I have four children.

I was young, part of me that was insecure needed something; a baby was a good idea to fill the gap. I mean, none of it was conscious decision to get pregnant. Each child I've had has helped me grow and open; each birth was a bit more expanded, each experience, each pregnancy I flowered more. My children have been my teachers. my masters. I needed four children to be where I am now.

You're bringing to a conscious state what people need. Well it took me until my ..... you're on the track that you have to really not want to be pregnant for it not to implant and if it does implant to actually psychically abort. To be able to do that and I have done that, but again it took me 4 pregnancies and to be in a situation where I absolutely knew that I positively did not want to be pregnant, that I had no attachment to the pregnancy, and it was to another

relationship and yes I had to be very clear that I had actually set up to get pregnant unconsciously although I had to let go of the man I wanted to keep a part of him in his child. Then what happened was that I still, it seemed like it took an eternity to reach and clear that space, but it was probably a matter of 4 or 5 weeks, during it what I had to then reach, I could see on an intellectual level...he's hanging on, I'm letting go of him, keep the child. I still hadn't let go of the baby, so then I had to take it the next step where O.K. by that time I was living in North West Australia. I'm not going to have this baby, there's absolutely no way I'm going to have this baby so it means an abortion, If I'm not going to be able to get rid of it, then I'll abort. I'd never had an abortion before, I'd always gone through with pregnancies whether they were unplanned or not. Like the first two wasn't an issue to get pregnant, it was great. The next two, there was no way I wanted to be pregnant, so though of course I kept them, it took months, maybe five months to totally accept, to totally embrace and falling love with it. So with this particular one, O.K., I'll have an abortion, there's no way I can have this baby. So, a friend had come up from Perth; I was prepared to fly down to Perth. It was when I decided to have the abortion, go down to Perth, leave the kids behind for that time with someone in Carnarvon, and the clincher was that I was not going to have anaesthetic. I had to find a doctor that would enable me to have an abortion without any out of it drugs, anything; if I couldn't be conscious when I allowed this being in I was going to be conscious when I let it out. Whatever pain it was going to go through for the abortion on the physical plane I would be in on that, it felt like a punishment, a whole guilt, but also being in touch with the pain. I find my greatest lessons come when I actually feel them. Intellectually they become a head trip, they can become repetitive on subtle levels. So I knew that for me it's to lift things out and actually embody the experience. O.K., I've got it. It was once I made the commitment that was definitely what I was going to do and it was a very short amount of time, maybe a day or so after that I was up snorkelling and I just, that was it, I just let go and I came up out of the water and I was ..... and I had the bleeding. My friend was still out and I was dancing on top of a rock, I was speechless. For her it was a classic because she's a therapist and a magnificent woman. And the music that was playing, I didn't know it as apart of something and it was really full on. And the children were there and I had not run any of this past them and I didn't want to verbalise what was happening to me. But at least she got it. That was as close as I've come to that type of ..... all the dynamics in there

were extreme.

And for me if I'm in a space ..... what I find it's helped me do, to be conscious that I don't want to be pregnant, it's also set up a variety of other things. What I found was I was more in touch ..... going back over doing the ovulation method put me in touch with my body. I got to be able to read my cycle, chart it. It was beautiful, a real ..... I can. I can't, and this is what will happen if I do ..... and then seeing where the mucous may appear and thinking will I take the risk. Just taking total responsibility and knowing there are other ways of being with a man and then what I saw was that inevitably when I was fertile, like at the peak of fertility, along he's come ..... I got to the point where I as not up for sex in this way. I'm attracting you on other plans and also contacting my personality, what I got to know was my desperate, the very needy little girl who just wants to be held, not have sex; just to be held and comforted. Part of me was a woman who needed to be held, sometimes after an hour or two the sexual mode would just take over. There's an enormous dance that takes place. Otherwise what I've found is that if women reach a certain age and don't want to have any more children they'll set themselves up for hysterectomies and all sorts of dramas. I've seen that happen.

My need to not get pregnant is far greater than my need for the challenge to see if I could do it again. I still don't have ultimate trust in...I learnt many things when I was living on the edge ..... and I have a lot of new programs and have been given a lot of new information, but living particularly in the city, living in an energy that I can easily fall in to the fast mode, and I've set up things in my life that are monitors to slow me. As long as I stay in that. Acknowledge where I was at, what I was needing and then feeling a whole new way of recycling the energy back through or on course and then putting all that energy or love back through. The combination of emotions could either blow out or come back and go forward. In my relationship, my husband and I have more depth, it has gone past ..... sex for us when we have it is something especially fine and orgasmic, but it's something that doesn't happen very often for us. When it does, it's quality. When things happen they've got depth. On the contraception level ..... keep me on track. I often look back to when I was..I wasn't sexually active as in intercourse until 18 on..and I was brought up with a fear of getting pregnant, that whole indoctrination. Now I'm conscious that it's there, but I'm conscious now that I also do not want to have any. In a sense it's the fear of still activated, but it's on a different plane. It is different. The no to being pregnant is in the vagina, the stomach, the legs,

my whole being does not want to be pregnant.... it has to be a whole knowing, or somewhere I'll set it up. It has to be total commitment. For me because I'm totally outrageous, I'm up for anything, so I had to become aware physically, Tai Chi is helping me enormously. It has to be for me because our natural instinct to reproduce, and for me when I'm in a fertile state....oh boy. I'm just one big pulsation, so I had to be fully aware, and the Billings method helped bring that to mind. I could physically see mucous, I could see texture and that really brought it into consciousness. I'm aware when I am fertile and when I'm not. Most of the time when I'm turned on I'm fertile, and that can be taught. If that can be taught it keeps people in touch with their bodies. It has to be an embodied experience. Workshops that take people over a whole cycle would be good; to be there over that three days approximately of high fertility is an extraordinary space for a woman. She can learn to be with it so that if she's in a situation she doesn't have to go out and get pregnant. My experience and part of my fear with it is ...I meditate constantly with it, because for me if I am in my full womanhood on a physical plane, if I had long flowing hair and clothes, I'd feel very vulnerable. If that womanhood isn't met, if my husband is not there and able to meet me in my full oneness, where I'm at, I think right, how am I going to get through.

Interview D: AGED 39; 3 CHILDREN.

I am in the way that it works for me and in order to explain that I have to explain a bit about the spiritual organisation with which I am involved and tell you something about how that operates and how that aspect of conception fits into that.

So, we belong to a group which is a spiritual organisation. The experience of this is an experience and we believe a receiving from God or higher powers, however you want to speak about it. So, it is a process of surrendering and actually having a receiving. This is experienced through movement, sound, visual images, or an awareness of consciousness or an understanding of things, or any or all of those going on at the same time. Or just one of them at any particular time. So for me it is something I can receive for myself at any time. There are all religions within the group, it is the experience. We talk

about it as being that core spiritual experience, that is quite alive in allowing some experience and understanding about it. In being drawn to practice this, and my husband being involved longer than I have. We call it being "open". What we would understand is that it is a process of worshipping God according to his grace . The contact being between our inner (soul), that part of us that is eternal has the contact and we try to surrender our hearts and minds so that the contact can be with this other part. Therefore it is a process of being developed and changed and cleansed and cleared of things which are within us, that have accumulated from our own actions or our ancestral line. I have the understanding of past lives. The idea is to change to bring us to a more whole state where we can worship without impediment.

That's the long term aspect about it. Getting back to the thing about babies and contraception. Most of us would feel, although the experience of individuals is all quite different. We see that children are drawn in through the sexual act and the quality of the sexual act, and this would mean some connection between the child who comes and the couple. There is some spiritual reality to why we connect up with certain children and not others. Also a feeling that we are all souls on a journey together. That being physical parents and children is not the only aspect; that there is more important spiritual work being done.

The quality of the sexual act is a strong and key focus to something. If we are feeling that we are trying to make progress and improve our whole being there is something intrinsic to the sexual act which can serve that. In the case of children who might come and in the case of our own life and also part of this surrendering process and worship. A vehicle for releasing blockages in a more spiritual sense. The sexual act has incredible potency for really positive development or also a powerful force for abuse. So, within the context the sexual act is seen as between the husband and wife as something very potent. Another aspect is the general aspect of surrender to this power is that we do this twice a week, going to a hall, and doing spiritual exercise. We also have something that we call "testing" the idea being that we can test reality; a tool for bringing spiritual awareness to questions or behaviours that we really want to find out about. So for testing we meet with some of our other sisters in the case of women and ask a particular question to do with our spiritual life, with the essence of our being and the choices that we make, and to ask and then go into the state of receiving and experience something that relates to the question which can be shared or not. Sometimes other people just

witness. So that's a tool that people would use in the context of being with brothers and sisters or in daily life. There are times when I stop and ask myself questions and there are just feelings within me that guide me and that is a process that's going on all the time.

In getting back to contraception, already there is that inner process going, giving signals, that I can tap into. I have 3 children, daughters, 15, 13, and 11. 2 years and one month apart. I met my husband at 23 and had been sexually active since 18. In that time I did not have any consciousness about this, but through this time I was quite sexually active with a number of sexual partners and never in that time practise any form of contraception apart from a vague awareness of the rhythm method. But only vaguely. I was foolish; the only awareness was that I did not want children, but there was no practice or awareness. I did not conceive. The longer that went on I assumed that I wouldn't have children. It was very risky. In hindsight it was very risky, with very little awareness. Perhaps I would say grace now or good luck then. I went on the pill once but was given such a hard time by the Catholic doctor that I went to that I stopped. So I can't explain that but it was like that. When I met my husband we were together a number of years before marriage, and I got an IUD inserted,. Now I interpret that I knew he was going to be the father of my babies and this was more dangerous. So I had an IUD for one or two months and did not like it, I was bleeding very heavily, so We felt there was no reason to use it so I had it removed. Then I was not in the spiritual group so for 2 to 3 years I was being touched and changed by that but my head was denying it. And eventually I decided to be "Opened" and at that point, I has an experience in which I was told that I was going to have a child. We had an experience of her coming.

A huge shift for me coming from feminist stuff and the path of not wanting children. i had the IUD out long before that, so there was a period of time without conscious contraception again. So this one was breastfed until 14 months, I ovulated once and conceived. Those years when the children were little in that 6 year period I was very open to having children. When they came we were happy for that. It was the same for each of them and I had 2 cycles before the next pregnancy. When the children were young our sex life was not as active as it had been. The third pregnancy was interesting because I had become involved in childbirth education and it was inconvenient to have children. There was some ambivalence about it but she came very clearly in the few nights before she conceived. I was a bit distressed because I wanted

to organise things differently for myself, but then that was fine. Because the 3 had come like that then I thought we might have a 4<sup>th</sup>. We just thought another one would come, and we were quite surprised that another one didn't. We were not doing anything about it but our sexual relationship was not as frequent, but no sense of not having sex during ovulation. When the last one was 4 there was a period of some months when we were not relating sexually and we felt a baby around who came and went but never really connected when we connected. Although we did not deliberately decided not to have this child. There was still some ambivalence about work in the world and about the relationship. In the real practical level we did not do anything to stop conceiving but there were factors which would make it difficult. we were not actively trying to have a child, but were surprised that one did not come. I was teaching and involved with childbirth education in that period. We were not actively pursuing having or not having another baby.

When the last one turned 7 there were issues around letting go of her. I wondered whether there were issues around having another baby or hanging on to my youngest. I had to become clear and work with these issues. A time of reflecting on this, I came to a point that I would have no more children for me. There was a separating between the spiritual aspect and the worldly one as I would have had one if that was necessary. Around that time I became more aware of my ovulating pattern. I was not in a fertile period of my cycle when one of the babies conceived. So I do have a sense of when my hormone changes and my cycle and vaguely take that into account. There is much more a feeling that on some level that I could say no to the beings who wanted to come in as babies. So I realised I was allowed to say no. At a much deeper level I think the bottom line must be to accept the baby if one came. I was a little more conscious that if we really do not want to have more children that means we must be more conscious about the quality of our sexuality and sexual relationship so that if there are times when we are not attuned we may open to a baby that did not need to happen. We had to raise our consciousness. In particular how we experience that is to come into a quiet state before sexual sharing, in that spiritually aware state so that we can feel whether it is appropriate or not to come together. So we are coming together from motivations that are higher or more discriminatory than other motivations, so, it is part of our worship to improve our state of being. The point of saying no is to the being who might enter. A prayer of asking that sexual sharing is a process of worship and if it is to do with my will , I do not

wish to have a child, But if it is God's will then I will accept it. I do this every time and then after we have come together then again I would say that in terms of a child my wish is not to have and ask to be protected from a child that does not really need to come. Sometimes there is not a clear yes or no and my husband has his own inner process of awareness where he is open to being guided by God and to act according to the highest will. In terms of children coming or not we both see that is more to do with me. We both bring it to our awareness. We had an experience where I know I was pregnant, at least a year ago and so we felt the baby conceive ( the child coming in energetically). At that point there was searching time for me and checking what we wanted. In my asking I asked that if this being was right I would have it, but if it was not necessary I prayed that I would not have it. This was with God and also to the child. In the end I missed one month and probably about 6 weeks from conception my period came and the baby decided to go. Asking consciously whether this was what we or the baby needed. So the baby passed. If there are times of ambivalence my husband sometimes practices withdrawal. If I feel like I'm around ovulation or there is ambivalence we practice withdrawal, but this is a bit vague. There is no other form of contraception. A feeling that the physical is the end product of prayer, becoming quiet, being in a state where we have God's blessing and are protected from anything unwanted. We try to ensure our part of being worthy of that state of grace . It can work to increase or decrease sexual activity. There is an awareness that there is a string of them who might come and the quality of my awareness of this is important. For all of us we had a feeling that we could go on endlessly, that the babies would just keep coming, but that also we were given some degree of choice and that the choice involved responsibility and some consciousness that needs to be a part of it. For me I say God and it is more of a cultural effect that I say "He", and for me it is much more of a process than a form. It's choice but there is responsibility. If you are denying it in that form then there must be some other form you are working in, that's part of the deal. The process is much more in the spiritual world than the physical for me. There are subconscious and unconscious factors at work with women who are infertile; they talk about "hostile mucous" and then the woman changes partners and conceives; what's going on there?

## Interview E: AGED 42; 3 CHILDREN

I can remember going through a time of feeling that I really wanted to be pregnant, then the disappointment but also the relief when I wasn't. I feel that a few times I actually conceived, but because my bottom line was and I feel still is that I don't want to have another baby, the fertilised egg did not embed in the uterus wall. It feels like there are those two points, actual acceptance of the sperm by the egg, then the acceptance by the mother (embedding in the uterus). I feel that the clearer I get, neither happen; maybe once in the past twelve months I feel I actually conceived. Prior to that I feel 2 to 3 times in the previous twelve months. There have also been times, twice I can remember clearly, when the feeling was that if my partner ejaculates inside me I will conceive. Miscarriage was the earlier stage of indecision. I felt as though there was a real tugging: yes, I want to be pregnant, No, I don't want another baby. Therefore I was able to let go of the baby and miscarry at 10 weeks. Unless you allow yourself to fully feel the loss, you will often conceive again quite quickly, which is very common.

So, the progress for me has been having the miscarriage, working through the loss, but I always saw her as a wonderful gift for me. After that I became clearer about my life purpose. Then the conceiving but not implanting, and now rarely conceiving. And now I experience a sense of freedom sexually; there's not the underlying feeling of will I/will I not conceive.

APPENDIX C

Language analysis of interview transcripts: Stage One

NUDIST STAND-ALONE v.2.3.1 FOR IBM PC

Program & manual copyright of, and 'NUDIST' trade mark of  
Replee P/L, Eltham, Victoria, Australia, 1985-92.

All enquiries to NUDIST Project,  
Applied Computing Research Institute,  
La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria 3083, Australia.  
Phone 479-1311, Fax 470-4915  
STD prefix (03), International prefix +61-3

LICENSEE: Holly Cargill

-----  
This file created on 1992 Sep 12, 14:25:46.

+++++  
ONLINE DATA DOCUMENTS  
-----

Retrieval for this document: 36 units out of 36, = 100%

-----  
\* AGED 50 3 CHILDREN  
----- TEXT UNITS 1-36:

\*Interview 5: age 50: 3 children: married

- +++++
- (1 1) /PSYCHOLOGY/MIND CONTROL
- (1 2 2) /PSYCHOLOGY/INTRAPSYCHIC/UNCONSCIOUS
- (1 2 3) /PSYCHOLOGY/INTRAPSYCHIC/INNER PROCESSES
- (2 2) /MYTHOLOGY/SPIRITUAL BELIEF
- (3 1) /ANTHROPOLOGY/CUSTOMS
- (4 1 2) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/DESCRIPTIONS
- (4 1 3) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/PROBLEMS WITH  
CONTRACEPTION

+++++  
:

Retrieval for this document: 87 units out of 87, = 100%

\*Interview 1: age 40: 3 children: married:

----- TEXT UNITS 1-87:

- +++++
- +++++
- (1 1) /PSYCHOLOGY/MIND CONTROL
  - (1 2 1) /PSYCHOLOGY/INTRAPSYCHIC/ARCHETYPE
  - (1 2 3) /PSYCHOLOGY/INTRAPSYCHIC/INNER PROCESSES
  - (1 2 4) /PSYCHOLOGY/INTRAPSYCHIC/CREATIVE WORK
  - (1 3 1) /PSYCHOLOGY/EMOTIONS/NEEDS
  - (1 3 2) /PSYCHOLOGY/EMOTIONS/FEELINGS
  - (2 2) /MYTHOLOGY/SPIRITUAL BELIEF
  - (4 1 1) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/CONTROL
  - (4 1 2) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/DESCRIPTIONS
  - (4 1 3) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/PROBLEMS WITH  
CONTRACEPTION

+++++

Retrieval for this document: 173 units out of 173, = 100%

\* AGED 39 4 CHILDREN

----- TEXT UNITS 1-173:

\*Interview 2: age 38: 4 children: married 1

- (1 1) /PSYCHOLOGY/MIND CONTROL
- (1 2 2) /PSYCHOLOGY/INTRAPSYCHIC/UNCONSCIOUS
- (1 2 3) /PSYCHOLOGY/INTRAPSYCHIC/INNER PROCESSES
- (1 3 1) /PSYCHOLOGY/EMOTIONS/NEEDS
- (1 3 2) /PSYCHOLOGY/EMOTIONS/FEELINGS
- (2 2) /MYTHOLOGY/SPIRITUAL BELIEF
- (4 1 1) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/CONTROL
- (4 1 2) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/DESCRIPTIONS

+++++

Retrieval for this document: 231 units out of 231, = 100%

\* AGED 39 3 CHILDREN

----- TEXT UNITS 1-231:

\*Interview 4: age 39: 3 children: married 1

- +++++
- (1 1) /PSYCHOLOGY/MIND CONTROL
  - (1 2 2) /PSYCHOLOGY/INTRAPSYCHIC/UNCONSCIOUS
  - (1 2 3) /PSYCHOLOGY/INTRAPSYCHIC/INNER PROCESSES
  - (1 2 4) /PSYCHOLOGY/INTRAPSYCHIC/CREATIVE WORK
  - (2 2) /MYTHOLOGY/SPIRITUAL BELIEF
  - (4 1 2) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/DESCRIPTIONS
  - (4 1 3) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/PROBLEMS WITH  
CONTRACEPTION
  - (4 1 4) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/QUALITY OF SEX

Retrieval for this document: 57 units out of 57, = 100%

\* AGED 42 3 CHILDREN

----- TEXT UNITS 1-57:

\*Interview 3: age 42: 3 children: married. 1

- +++++
- (1 1) /PSYCHOLOGY/MIND CONTROL
  - (1 2 3) /PSYCHOLOGY/INTRAPSYCHIC/INNER PROCESSES
  - (1 2 4) /PSYCHOLOGY/INTRAPSYCHIC/CREATIVE WORK
  - (1 3 2) /PSYCHOLOGY/EMOTIONS/FEELINGS
  - (4 1 1) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/CONTROL
  - (4 1 2) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/DESCRIPTIONS
  - (4 1 4) /BIOLOGY/BODY PROCESSES/QUALITY OF SEX
- +++++

APPENDIX D

Interview transcripts: Stage Two

## Interview 1.

My first experience of birth control started when I experienced really extreme period pains, so strong I would pass out with it. So I had to have the doctor come and give me pethidine and round about that time my mother said I should go and see the local doctor who told me he was putting me on hormones. He didn't want me to know I was going on the Pill because they thought I'd fool around. And so for a period of time there I thought I was on hormones; no, it's not the Pill, it's just hormones. So, I'm on the pill. I had two or three different types, I was 15. Can't say I noticed a lot until I was in a relationship with R and got married. I noticed a bloating and a swelling of the breasts and I remember about a year or so after and in those days they thought you had to go off the Pill to give your body a rest. Well I was off for a month and I was pregnant with P; one month and I was in. I didn't go back on the Pill for quite some time after P. I went back on after I stopped breast feeding after 15 months and my cycle started happening and I went on the Pill. Then I felt a growing need to have another child. So off the Pill and within a month I was pregnant again with her. Life was very different because having two small people under the age of three was quite demanding; quite a stressful time. Then I thought my relationship with the Pill by that stage was that I was really starting to dread it. The changes in my body, it did something to me emotionally and a thinking or a feeling process which was horrible. I really hated it. It was yukky. One of things with the pill was that you had to take it every day and not forget. It wasn't something you could relax about. Forget to take the pill and my experience was that you fall pregnant. So there was a certain amount of tension naturally. I think there was also the sense of something that was controlling me. It was dictating to me cyclical changes in my body. There was a sense of something being added to my system that wasn't me, that was accelerating or exacerbating things. There was a definite mood change, I could feel it when it started to happen around ovulation there was sense of I suppose you could call it PMT. There was definitely a change. And I really didn't like it at all. I hated the fact that I had to take the Pill, that it had to be in control of me, that I had to use something to control fertility. So I was back on the Pill after M and I thought I don't want to have any more babies. I was 25. I decided that I'd had enough children so I went to my GP

and said I wanted to be sterilised and he said "You're a bit too young for that" and I said I hated being on the Pill and especially the emotional changes. So what he told me to do was go off the pill for a month and he'd fit an IUD. So I did that and then I was pregnant with T, and I didn't consider going back on the Pill. I had an ectopic pregnancy, I had a curette and then I fell in with R. And after R we solved the fertility problem because my husband had a vasectomy so I haven't had anything since then. What I would have liked to have had is more cooperation in terms of fertility. Particularly the first 2 were wanted but after the second I really didn't want more children but I was told that sterilisation wasn't an option but how could I stop myself falling pregnant. The medical profession did not offer options other than pill, diaphragm and IUD and the pill was by far the most reliable. But I didn't like the feelings that happened. I didn't know any way to control my own fertility and I fall pregnant so easily. For me knowing that I don't want a child I think at the time what was operating was my life is full enough as it is and a certain amount of self interest. There are things I want to do for myself. There are things I want to do. There was a sense that there is something I want to do for me. But of course T happened and having an abortion wasn't an option and being pregnant at first there was lot of anger. And the second one after that was even more powerful but after there was something within me which said I have done enough even though there are times when I hold a baby and say isn't it gorgeous but it wasn't as strong. I have the sense that if I had the capacity within myself to view when I wanted to have children that would be an enormously empowering thing. It reminds of something that I experienced . I can remember the sensations of sexually active times before I was married when there would or would not be forms of contraception. There was a sense that I said "No" to being pregnant ..... I don't know what was operating but I never fell pregnant even though there were circumstances like having sex during ovulation. Something was operating in me saying, "No, not now, it's not time", and yet I fell pregnant so easily (once married). There was something within. Even in circumstances when condoms would break or I was late for periods I never got pregnant and the minute I get married, I get pregnant. And so something was operating.

## Interview 2.

Coming from a large family I always believed I would have a large family too. It never occurred to me that I would have fertility problems other than controlling it. Went on the pill at 18 because a girlfriend gave it to me; just in case. I took an early feminist stance and refused to take it later on the grounds that I was poisoning my body. Got pregnant, had an abortion, left college, went home to nurse and went straight back on the Pill for 4 to 5 years! I didn't suffer huge complications on the Pill that I was aware of; slight fluid retention maybe. I was 18 to 23 years old and fairly fit and busy. Didn't drink, smoked a little. About 23 years, after nurses training and change in relationship, I decided I needed to respect my body more and see what difference it would make off the Pill. Noticed change in body shape; was concerned that I was infertile maybe. Strong instinct to reproduce was there but unvoiced. I believe that when I conceived 6 months later I really wanted to. I was physically open and ready too. Mentally it was a different story and I denied it for years. Post-pregnancy had an IUD; so frightened of getting pregnant again. No complications with it that were obvious. After removing IUD after 2 years because we had stopped having sex I kept a rhythm chart to give me rough idea of when I was fertile. Was aware of mucous changes but not sure of fertility range in that. Had sex after a long abstinence and next morning woke up and knew I was pregnant. Looking back once again my body was ready and open. My first child was 18 months old. I was over the worst of it all; nearly finished feeding, going well. Mentally I was considering leaving my husband. After her birth my sense of my body was quite different. I felt powerful and complete and knowing, even though I became depressed. I was determined never to take the Pill or have an IUD again. Settled for a diaphragm for emergencies only. Became very aware of "safe" items and was very careful. Used condoms most of the time anyway because of AIDS scare in the 80's. Last pregnancy I had been dissatisfied with my work. I had a successful business but was disappointed with that. Someone asked what was my biggest achievement and I said, "Having my children". I was living on my own apart from my children at the time. My sister was getting married in Australia. I was organising it. I was so happy when she came home. My sisters-in-law were both trying desperately to get pregnant and I was advising them on what to do and encouraging them not to look at the medical model. It was a very family time. And I got pregnant. Can't even remember the sex. I didn't realise I was pregnant for weeks. I was so busy I hadn't noticed the lack of my period. I had a very conscious pregnancy after I found out. After her birth and being plunged back into

mother's groups I realised our general ignorance from start to finish about our bodies and how we were passing that down to our children. Did natural fertility course and adolescent sexuality and became passionate about education rather than just childbirth education. In hindsight I feel my instincts were incredibly strong but my awareness was turned down. I could never feel confident that I had control over my body to the extent that I could have sex and decide not to get pregnant. I felt as if I respected the cycles and knew my body that I could avoid pregnancy. I've never taken undue risks and worried over it. Only now as I approach menopause do I feel I have a real handle on it all and a sense that I've done my child-rearing and that's it.

### Interview 3.

The request for my experience with birth control has caused me to look back through time, dredge up memories, become curious and explore events and attitudes that led me to choose my personal birth control method. It has also made me look at my sexuality and its expression thus far. With this exploration has come enlightenment, anger and guilt - all common feelings! From 1998, it is like looking back into a dark tunnel from broad daylight and going back into the tunnel and seeing a dappled surface with a patch of light at the end. So in the preparation for this article, I re-read a book published in the late sixties and was fascinated by the language and attitudes. I came to understand the basis from which I have operated in this respect. In 1898 Freud commented 'it cannot be denied that contraceptive measures become a necessity in married life at some time or other, and theoretically it would be one of the greatest triumphs of mankind, one of the most tangible liberations from the bondage of nature to which we are subject, were it possible to raise the responsible act of procreation to the level of voluntary and intentional act, and to free it from its entanglement with an indispensable satisfaction of a natural desire'. Birth control in the sixties and according to the book was about controlling the population and the scarce resources of the world. Much emphasis was put on the poorer nations and the women's ability to cope with yet another mouth to feed and body to nurture, etc. It also emphasised a couple's freedom to choose how many and the spaces between children. Birth control became

thought of as a deliberate social policy used in the service of society. Not that any of this has changed. However, the development of the pill and changing social/moral attitudes has [for about 20 years] enabled young people, especially young women, to explore their sexuality without the fears and social mores that I encountered. Perhaps my mother's fears of my potential as a siren could have been realised! Sexuality in my family was never discussed. We were 'prepared' for adulthood and sexual expression by an intellectual approach and physical descriptions of reproduction without any explanations of the feelings and drives which accompany such development. A book written this century by Dr. Marie Stopes was one which graced our bookshelves but was not a book in which we took any particular interest. My early burgeoning sexuality was ignored and strictly controlled by rules and privileges - when to be home, justifying what I was doing out so late, going to tennis before and church after a Saturday night out, the encouragement of my young sister accompanying me and my current friend on Sunday drives, etc. The fear of becoming pregnant and the following 'shame' was always present with that unspoken attitude of fallen/wild woman. My first serious friendship was with someone six years older than me and I was surprised to hear recently that I was considered a very wild girl - if only that were true! I have vague memories of knowing about condoms but knowing how to procure them from the friendly family chemist was quite another issue. I watched with some awe and no doubt envy the confidence with which my friends and acquaintances pursued their sexuality. Any opportunity to 'stray' was hampered by the saying 'ladies keep their legs crossed and powder dry'. In closer encounters I was aware that the male species considered it my duty to protect myself- an attitude I took on but about which I did nothing. The book also reflected exactly where I was when considering birth control methods when I was married in 1967. I recall in 1966 discussing, with an English friend about to be married, the pro's and cons of the available methods. She had interviewed her doctor and against his advice had chosen the Pill as the preferred method. At that time English doctors seemed much more circumspect with regard to the Pill than I found their Australian counterparts. The pamphlets and their elaboration by the doctor were enlightening but one got the feeling that the Pill was not the preferred option. When I returned to Australia to be married I was taken to the Newman family doctor and the choices of birth control methods laid out before me. I had also been informed that I must save \$2,000 before coming pregnant [not by the doctor!]. In summary: The condom - considered useless 'shutting

the door after the horse had bolted' was the comment I recall. The IUD - it was unacceptable to me to have a foreign body jangling around inside, the length of time it could remain uncertain and the risk of implantation into a foetus was unacceptable. I am glad not to have the problem which assails a friend who has a Dalkon shield in her hip. The Pill - the last option was also one with which I had reservations. The information which I received was quite different to that given in the U.K. The doctor and my fiance were impatient and bullying in their attitude to my uncertainty. As I was unable to put my view forward in a convincing and acceptable manner, compliance with the latter method seemed the best way to leave the surgery quickly. In retrospect I wonder that other known methods were not brought up and given due consideration. I cannot remember much about the effects of taking the Pill. I do know that I suffered with 'spotting' and was given another type. I seem to recall having to calculate the days when to start each month and some types of Pill having different coloured pills to be taken at different times of the cycle. It all became just a way of life. I was conscientious with regard to having medical check-ups and know that later there were many more contraceptive pills on the market. I was quite interested in the publication of further advances in the development of Pills and know that much research was being undertaken and dosages of the active hormones being altered. I cannot remember stopping the Pill but presume it must have been about 1969, obviously having saved the required \$2,000!. Conceiving was not easy for me but we were delighted that mid 1970 I became pregnant. It was certainly not the case of stopping the medication and immediate scoring! I have no memories of the type of Pill prescribed after the birth of my first baby in early 1971. Life from late 1970 till mid 1972 was rather difficult and tensions throughout the immediate and extended family were high. I presume that we planned another child about 1973 so I would have stopped taking the Pill in 1972. It was our ideal to have three children and a disappointment to me that I seemed unable to conceive again. I had lots of tests, took the temperature each morning to ascertain when I was ovulating - all to no avail - I was told by my gynaecologist that it must be me as P had proved himself! I went through the uncomfortable process of having carbon dioxide pumped through my fallopian tubes and uterus to ensure that everything was in working order - a far cry from the laser treatment undergone these days. Finally attention was turned on Peter. It was found that he had an extremely low sperm count, the sperm also being very slow moving. He was advised to wear loose cotton underpants to keep the testes away from his

body and cooler. Eighteen months later I finally conceived. James was born in 1976 and I took the 'mini pill' for 10 months while I breast fed him. After that I presume it was back to the dreaded 'Pill' which lasted just a few months when planning for the third child commenced. Our desire for a third child waned as we both became older and less enthusiastic about broken nights of sleep. In May 1979 I had a tubal ligation and thus ended my child bearing ability and any need for any contraception. As I had noted some years earlier it was me who had to take responsibility for this. Perhaps the attitude is encapsulated by a comment made by a relation of Peter's to his wife when a vasectomy was mooted 'What about my second wife!'. On reflection now in 1998 I look back and ponder what may have happened had I been more adventurous in my exploring my sexuality. I look in anger at the inability of my parents to be more open. Something which my youngest sister escaped - when she first lived with her partner ..... my parents were very upset and would ring both my sister and I with their concerns. My father wrote to my sister and called her partner 'the seducer of my little girl! I also appreciate that while my parents were open minded and encouraged open discussion with most subjects sex was not one of them and they, now in their eighties, are products of the Victorian age. Whilst sex and the expression of sexuality was talked about with our children I have also pangs of guilt that I could have done better!

#### Interview 4.

When I was a teenager I was actually put on the Pill when I was about 15 because I had very heavy periods like very heavy bleeding and I suppose at around that time I was beginning to be very interested in boys. I had no brothers. I didn't understand that this pill was the same Pill as the contraceptive Pill. So during those teenage years I didn't have intercourse but I was so naive that I had massive panic attacks after serious kissing or petting. And I don't know if I really did think "I'll get pregnant" but I certainly had massive panic and anxiety and whatever. I also was then sitting with not really an awareness of my emotions or the experience of my body let alone taking precautions. Nor did I know that I was actually protected. All that went on and then I went to Uni and again almost sort of walking around like I'm not

really aware that I'm in woman's body. So I was a student, I did yoga, I did swimming, and I thought men were interesting and then I ran about 100 miles. So I was my normal self talking but I don't really think I was there, present. In the second year I went to New Guinea and I was still on the Pill and I'm trying to think how come I didn't have a period while I was away. It was a cultural exchange and there had been orientation meetings and I can't remember what I did about my period. I know I took toilet paper but I gave up using that and used leaves like the villagers but I am sure I didn't have anything for my period. I have a sort of a hunch that I was on the Pill and somehow that was going to regulate my periods but I can't remember a communication about it. What happened was that when I travelled around for while, not in the village. I had 3 weeks in the village. My heroine was Margaret Mead and I wanted to be an anthropologist. When I left the village I boarded a plane to come to Port Moresby. I was totally naive that I could be vulnerable, I was travelling alone as this white 19 year old and I board this plane and it turns out there is a New Guinea politician who is the Minister for Broadcasting on this plane and when he finds out that I have been staying in the village he sort of adopts me. So he invites me to go to the opening of a radio station so I figured I would go. So I go. Anyway I am not actually harmed by any of the New Guineans at all but what happened was that my luggage hadn't arrived and the Australian guy who was the airport controller offered me a night at his place and that actually became an abusive situation. So the next thing I know is that somehow he's in bed with me and I scream for him to get out and he's really quite horrible to me but he doesn't actually fully force himself on me. And then I sat outside until daylight and I could get out of there. I got through the next 2 days and made my way back to Melbourne petrified that I was going to be pregnant and that I was shameful. With no awareness that I was on the Pill and protected but I don't actually know. I am not aware that the Pill I am on would actually stop pregnancy and that I had not even had sex. It took me about 4 weeks after I got back to go to the student health services and I actually went in and then a female doctor looked after me and with gentle smile told me that I had been on the Pill anyway. Oh. You mean it's that Pill. Then I fell in love a little later with a man who was visiting but never went beyond hugs and kisses. I don't let anyone touch me too much. I think I'm still frightened that even though I'm on the Pill it won't stop me getting pregnant and I will be found out. When I'm 14 or 15 every time a boy kissed me I had massive guilt. I was grief struck when he went back. It was genuine grief but I didn't know that my

emotions were reciprocated. About a couple years later I get confirmation that we had been mutually in love but neither of us had risked saying it at the time. After that then I'm doing my honours thesis and my supervisor sexually abuses me. This quite sleazy guy in a supervision session was all over me and it came as an awful shock to me. I pushed him away, him having not been successful at penetrating and I felt in the wrong for not satisfying his need and for leading him on. That story gets repeated a few times and I barely get through writing my honours thesis. Eventually I link up with student counselling and a counsellor supported me. My confidence was shattered. I get through 4<sup>th</sup> year. No encounters of an intimate nature with men. I am singing and then my future husband joins the choir and something ignites between us and I was just finishing my last assignments for the year and he said "If you feel like ringing me when you've finished, please do". So I was still fairly naive and I took him literally and rang. He was this very gentle man who I could talk to. He would not have abused me. So we had these long drives and intimate conversations and this stage I am not on the Pill. He was not all that pure and I am not taking any precautions. So we fell in love and get engaged although we decide to wait a year before we tell anyone and I'm adamant that we won't have sex before we're married. And he basically respected that. Then a couple of months before we get married I go to see someone at the Community Health Centre, a female doctor because I only trust female doctors, even now. And then I went back on the Pill. It was not a very well thought out approach, I suppose. M didn't ever push me when I said that I wouldn't have sex until we were married. So then I was on the Pill. There was something in me that didn't actually feel that comfortable with taking it I felt that somehow my body wasn't right and then when we decided to have children after we had been married 6 years. So I go off the Pill and when I get pregnant soon after and then I breast fed both of them for about 2 and a half which protected me anyway and I didn't feel like having sex anyway for quite a while. I had bad tearing and was feeding on demand. I was loving being a mother. Pregnancy was the only time I had felt really comfortable in my body and the labours were short and intense I can't remember the pain. The shock was that it was so quick. My body told me what I wanted to eat and not eat. All the earlier time was battles with weight and diets and binge eating. So I don't go back on the Pill between the children and then my husband has a vasectomy. And now if I needed contraception I would use condoms.

## Interview 5.

It's important that I be honest with myself and with you. Contraception and choices is what I'm talking about and sometimes there are no choices. I'm trying to remember what ages I had children and when I had to think about contraception. I do have 4 children and I have also had some miscarriages. I probably had to start worrying about contraception at an early age and certainly my biggest fear with expressing my sexuality was with becoming pregnant and I had a mother who said that I was very fertile and would get pregnant easily. She wasn't so much against sex as such but it was about getting pregnant when you weren't ready and I got the definite impression that it could make life change and not necessarily the way you want it to. I was aware of my mother's impression and other people around me. It was certainly taboo in my early years to be sexually active. The idea was that you got married without having had too much sexual activity. So, early days with my partner who was a neighbour, a young man who I loved very much, we were in a relationship for quite a while. Condoms proved to be very successful and there was a lot of worry on my part because we had to purchase them and it was pre-planned and that didn't suit me. It was something about good girls don't want to have sex or plan it, that sort of thing. There were a few mishaps, too. Condoms broke or another one was if you wanted to have more sex. I have only recently found out that pre-ejaculation semen is quite fertile, which would explain a few things for me and ways of how I did get pregnant. I was married for 15 years. After my children were born that was the only time we used condoms for the sake of health and to prevent pregnancy even though they say that you can't conceive soon after birth but I thought that knowing me I couldn't be too careful. At one stage when I was on the low dosage Pill and I was breastfeeding my second daughter I did fall pregnant with my third. So along the way I have often felt that many contraceptives are certainly not that foolproof. In my early days of marriage I was on a much higher dosage of pill for months. I was a bit haphazard with taking these pills so there were times when I forgot them and times when I didn't really want to take the pill deep down. And that's been a big part of my feelings towards the Pill. I think I've always wanted to have babies. On a practical level there have been times when I have thought that this isn't the right time. I've known that

my husband didn't particularly want a child or another child. Just on the topic of the Pill. This spanned over a number of years. About 4 years ago I tried the Pill again. I now realise that I wasn't worried about getting pregnant and I was more concerned about my partner not wanting to have a baby. I actually did become pregnant not long after this relationship and I was still married. My youngest child was only 2 and at the time I hadn't sorted out my marriage. I wanted the new relationship but I hadn't left the previous relationship. The thoughts of having another child at that time were that it wasn't the right time to bring a child into the world. My main reason for having the termination was that I didn't want my partner to feel that he had been steam rolled or roped into it. And that was a really big consideration. In my marriage my husband had expressed that he felt tied by the children and that he joked that he hadn't wanted any. He was frightened of the responsibilities of them and deep down did want children. Contraception isn't a separate issue; it's all tied up with your relationship and circumstances and your financial circumstances. I always felt and it was passed onto me by my parents not to make decisions for financial reasons. The thought of having a baby as single parent when I am already supporting 4 is daunting. There's part of me that says "Who cares; I'd survive anyway. You always do". I've also tried an IUD. I had one for a couple of years and this would have been about 6 years ago. That proved to be quite good in that you could put it in and forget it. I didn't have any problems. I was aware that my periods were heavier but it was good in the practical sense because I wasn't very good at keeping up with the Pill. I've always had this underlying feeling of wanting to be pregnant or having another child and in fact still have those feelings very strongly, so the IUD was good. There was a fear of it as I'd heard terrible stories of it messing up people's insides and them not being able to have children. Even after 4 children I don't feel that I've finished, that my childbearing days are over. There were reactions like "Oh, another one!" from the family with the third and fourth children. My miscarriages were devastating; a big sense of loss. At the time it never occurred to me that I'd have one and felt a sense of loss for many years. Being allowed to have the sense of loss helped the pain to diminish a bit. Even though I believe it is nature's way there is still a sense of loss. I have used abstinence as a form of contraception on the odd occasion, although rarely. I have resorted to oral sex or other methods to prevent pregnancy. I have a partner who withdraws to prevent pregnancy but I don't consider that a very good method but I'm not concerned because I don't mind if I get pregnant so I've dumped that with him. We have been

unprepared and still ended up in bed and he's the one who shows self-control and discipline. I've said "Don't count on me because I know that I want another child." My mother recommended never to use the rhythm method because it didn't work. I got pregnant within a few days of my period. I am certainly fertile. Diaphragm. I hadn't seen one until a few years ago and after my effort of taking the Pill. I didn't want to take it and also it didn't agree with me. It did alter my hormones and my mood. Stressed, miserable etc. Either the Pill was not helping or it was one more thing where I felt controlled. I gave up on that idea. Fortunately I wasn't having sex regularly so the risk of pregnancy was lessened. I went in to be measured for my diaphragm and I didn't realise it was so involved. If I had I wouldn't have bothered. I felt awful that I was being measured for the size of my cervix. That felt like an intrusion and I was quite embarrassed. So I purchased the diaphragm and the cream but the day I was supposed to go back I didn't make it to the appointment. I didn't find it all that successful in that we could both feel it. I am told that that was because it wasn't fitted properly. It all comes back to my unwillingness to get any form of contraception right. However, I do think that if I was given a form of contraception that wasn't intrusive into my body or my health and not have the fear of thrombosis or smoking and being on the Pill and all those things that would come into it, maybe I'd use it better and it would be more successful. I certainly don't see abortion as a method of contraception because it is so emotional and it is certainly traumatic on both parties but especially women and it is something that you don't feel probably is ever OK ..... there are times I've forgotten about it but it does seem to rear its ugly head again and I've actually had 2 terminations which I haven't admitted to any one person before. Different people have known about different ones because I've needed help with the children or getting home from hospital and it's something that I feel I haven't come to terms with myself and I would have preferred not to have had them but I didn't see an alternative at the time. That probably comes from very deep within about life: a foetus is life and I can't think anything else at this point so I feel like I did do something wrong. I don't think I beat myself around the head about it because I had to consider my other children and myself. I also remember a friend of mine who was in tears about his girlfriend having an abortion and I sympathise with the male point of view. My partner did have the feeling that it was the woman's choice and thanked me for taking the responsibility. I wonder if he thinks that I didn't want his baby. That makes me sad because I did and still do so there are regrets

there. That's where the ambivalence comes in, because I would rather have contraception and prevention of a pregnancy than decide what to do with one. Whether to have a child in terrible circumstances or not to have it is very difficult. I've heard people say that women aren't good workers because they always have to be somewhere for their children and men don't appreciate not doing all those things and still doing their job as well. I love the fact that I can have a pregnancy and a baby and a child and also be in an important role. I've enjoyed it very much. Pregnancy isn't just about having a baby; it's about having a child and a young adult. There are headaches along the way but I wouldn't swap it. I once went to see a doctor about having my tubes tied and a few friends had this done and felt relieved. As I spoke to the doctor he said that I wasn't a candidate for that as I wasn't in a position to make definite decisions. Even if I didn't want another child I don't want the decision made for me that I can't have any more children. I think it is an integral part of me as a woman; not the only part as I have other pursuits too. I feel for somebody who has to have a hysterectomy; I don't see the reproductive parts being all of a woman but I do see it as an integral part. What I want to maintain is choice. I don't want to be determined by my body or by society whether I should or shouldn't have children. We are pushed around a lot about when we should or shouldn't have them.

APPENDIX E

Language analysis of interview transcripts: Stage 2

Q.S.R. NUD.IST Power version, revision 4.0.  
Licensee: Holly Cargill.

PROJECT: thesis, User Holly Cargill.

\*\*\*\*\*  
(1) /DISEMPOWERMENT  
\*\*\* No Definition  
\*\*\*\*\*  
+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: a-  
+++ Retrieval for this document: 8 units out of 118, = 6.6%  
++ Text units 2-3:  
Its important that I be honest with myself and with you. Contraception  
and choices is 2  
what I'm talking about and sometimes there are no choices. I'm trying to 3  
remember  
++ Text units 5-7:  
children and I have also had some miscarriages. I probably had to start 5  
worrying  
about contraception at an early age and certainly my biggest fear with 6  
expressing my  
sexuality was with becoming pregnant and I had a mother who said that I 7  
was very  
++ Text units 116-118:  
do see it as an integral part. What I want to maintain is choice. I don't 116  
want to be  
determined by my body or by society whether I should or shouldn't have 117  
children. We  
are pushed around a lot about when we should or shouldn't have them. 118  
\*\*\*\*\*  
+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: intc  
+++ Retrieval for this document: 4 units out of 46, = 8.7%  
++ Text units 36-37:  
groups I realised our general ignorance from start to finish about our 36  
bodies and how  
we were passing that down to our children. Did natural fertility course 37  
and adolescent  
++ Text units 40-41:  
was turned down. I could never feel confident that i had control over my 40  
body to the  
extent that I could have sex and decide not to get pregnant. I felt as if 41  
I respected the  
\*\*\*\*\*  
+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: inte  
+++ Retrieval for this document: 7 units out of 114, = 6.1%  
++ Text units 32-33:  
any particular interest. My early burgeoning sexuality was ignored and 32  
strictly  
controlled by rules and privileges -when to be home, justifying what I 33  
was doing out  
++ Text units 36-37:  
Sunday drives, etc. The fear of becoming pregnant and the following 36  
'shame' was  
always present with that unspoken attitude of fallen/wild woman. My first 37  
serious  
++ Text units 63-65:  
bullying in their attitude to my uncertainty. As I was unable to put my 63  
view forward in  
a convincing and acceptable manner, compliance with the latter method 64  
seemed the  
best way to leave the surgery quickly. In retrospect I wonder that other 65  
known (The Pill)  
\*\*\*\*\*  
+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: intje  
+++ Retrieval for this document: 6 units out of 81, = 7.4%  
++ Text units 7-8:  
contraceptive Pill. So during those teenage years I didn't have 7  
intercourse but I was  
so naive that I had massive panic attacks after serious kissing or 8  
betting. And I don't  
++ Text units 10-11:  
anxiety and whatever. I also was then sitting with not really an 10  
awareness of my

(1).txt

page: 2

emotions or the experience of my body let alone taking precautions. Nor  
 did I know 11

++ Text units 37-38:  
 was going to be pregnant and that I was shameful. With no awareness that  
 I was on 37

the Pill and protected but I don't actually know. I am not aware that the  
 Pill I am on 38

+++++

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: intr: :  
 +++ Retrieval for this document: 18 units out of 68, = 26%

++ Text units 19-30:  
 something to me emotionally and a thinking or a feeling process which was  
 horrible. I 19

really hated it. It was yukky. One of things with the pill was that you  
 had to take it 20

every day and not forget. It wasn't something you could relax about.  
 Forget to take 21

the pill and my experience was that you fall pregnant. So there was a  
 certain amount. 22

of tension naturally. I think there was also the sense of something that  
 was 23

controlling me. It was dictating to me cyclical changes in my body. There  
 was a 24

sense of something being added to my system that wasn't me, that was  
 accelerating 25

or exacerbating things. There was a definite mood change, I could feel it  
 when it 26

started to happen around ovulation there was sense of I suppose you could  
 call it 27

PMT. There was definitely a change. And I really didn't like it at all. I  
 hated the fact 28

that I had to take the Pill, that it had to be in control of me, that I  
 had to use 29

something to control fertility. So I was back on the Pill after M and I  
 thought I don't 30

++ Text units 39-41:  
 fertility. Particularly the first 2 were wanted but after the second I  
 really didn't want 39

more children but I was told that sterilisation wasn't an option but how  
 could I stop 40

myself falling pregnant. The medical profession did not offer options  
 other than pill, 41

++ Text units 47-49:  
 sense that there is something I want to do for me. But of course I  
 happened and 47

having an abortion wasn't an option and being pregnant at first there was  
 let of 48

anger. And the second one after that was even more powerful but after  
 There was 49

+++++

+++ Total number of text units retrieved = 43  
 +++ Retrievals in 5 out of 5 documents, = 100%.  
 +++ The documents with retrievals have a total of 427 text units,  
 so text units retrieved in these documents = 10%.  
 +++ All documents have a total of 427 text units,  
 so text units found in these documents = 10%.  
 +++++

Q.S.R. NUD.IST Power version, revision 4  
Licensee: Holly Cargill.

PROJECT: thesis, User Holly Cargill,

\*\*\*\*\*  
 (2) /UNCONSCIOUS INTERNAL REGULATION  
 \*\*\* No Definition  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 +++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: intr  
 +++ Retrieval for this document: 9 units out of 68, = 13%  
 ++ Text units 54-62:  
 experienced . I can remember the sensations of sexually active times  
before I was 54  
married when there would or would not be forms of contraception. There  
was a 55  
sense that I said no to being pregnant..... I don't know what was  
 operating but I 56  
 never fell pregnant even though there were circumstances like having sex  
 during 57  
 ovulation. Something was operating in me saying, "No, not now, it's not  
 time", and yet 58  
 I fell pregnant so easily (once married). There was something within.  
 Even in 59  
 circumstances when condoms would break or I was late for periods I never  
 got 60  
 pregnant and the minute I get married, I get pregnant. And so something  
 was 61  
 operating. 62  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 +++ Total number of text units retrieved = 9  
 +++ Retrievals in 1 out of 5 documents, = 20%.  
 +++ The documents with retrievals have a total of 68 text units,  
 so text units retrieved in these documents = 13%.  
 +++ All documents have a total of 427 text units,  
 so text units found in these documents = 2.1%.  
 \*\*\*\*\*

*- same as rebel reports of women*

\*\*\*\*\*  
 (5) /DESIRE TO HAVE BABIES  
 \*\*\* No Definition  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 +++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: a  
 +++ Retrieval for this document: 6 units out of 118, = 5.1%  
 ++ Text units 31-31:  
 towards the Pill. I think I've always wanted to have babies. On a  
 practical level there 31  
 ++ Text units 53-54:  
 sense because I wasn't very good at keeping up with the Pill. I've always  
had this 53  
underlying feeling of wanting to be pregnant or having another child and  
in fact still 54  
 ++ Text units 57-57:  
 have children. Even after 4 children I don't feel that I've finished,  
that my childbearing, 57  
 ++ Text units 81-82:  
 wasn't fitted properly. It all comes back to my unwillingness to get any  
 form of 61  
contraception right. However, I do think that if I was given a form of  
contraception 62  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 +++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: intr  
 +++ Retrieval for this document: 1 unit out of 46, = 2.2%  
 ++ Text units 12-12:  
 infertile maybe. Strong instinct to reproduce was there but unvoiced, I  
 believe that 12  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 +++ Total number of text units retrieved = 7  
 +++ Retrievals in 2 out of 5 documents, = 40%.  
 +++ The documents with retrievals have a total of 164 text units,  
 so text units retrieved in these documents = 4.3%.  
 +++ All documents have a total of 427 text units,  
 so text units found in these documents = 1.6%.  
 \*\*\*\*\*

Q.S.R. NUD.IST Power version, revision 4.0.  
 Licensee: Holly Cargill.

PROJECT: thesis, User Holly Cargill.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 (3) /DISSATISFACTION  
 \*\*\* No Definition  
 +++++  
 +++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: a  
 +++ Retrieval for this document: 10 units out of 118, = 8.5%  
 ++ Text units 28-30:  
 marriage I was on a much higher dosage of pill for months. I was a bit  
 haphazard 28  
 with taking these pills so there were times when I forgot them and times  
 when I didn't 29  
 really want to take the pill deep down. And that's been a big part of my  
 feelings 30  
 ++ Text units 55-56:  
 have those feelings very strongly, so the IUD was good. There was a fear  
 of it as I'd 55  
 heard terrible stories of it messing up people's insides and them not  
 being able to (conceive). 56  
 ++ Text units 65-65:  
 withdraws to prevent pregnancy but I don't consider that very good method  
 but I'm 65  
 ++ Text units 72-74:  
 Pill. I didn't want to take it and also it didn't agree with me. It did  
 alter my hormones 72  
 and my mood. Stressed, miserable etc. Either the Pill was not helping or  
 it was one 73  
 more thing where I felt controlled. I gave up on that idea. Fortunately I  
 wasn't having 74  
 ++ Text units 77-77:  
 felt awful that I was being measured for the size of my cervix. That felt  
 like an 77  
 +++++  
 +++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: intc.  
 +++ Retrieval for this document: 3 units out of 46, = 6.5%  
 ++ Text units 5-5:  
 stance and refused to take it later on the grounds that I was poisoning  
 my body. Got 5  
 ++ Text units 23-24:  
 and knowing, even though I became depressed. I was determined never to  
 take the 23  
 Pill or have an IUD again. Settled for a diaphragm for emergencies only.  
 Became 24  
 +++++  
 +++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: intl- c  
 +++ Retrieval for this document: 4 units out of 114, = 3.5%  
 ++ Text units 56-59:  
 condom - considered useless 'shutting the door after the horse had  
 bolted' was the 56  
 comment I recall. The IUD - it was unacceptable to me to have a foreign  
 body 57  
 jangling around inside, the length of time it could remain uncertain and  
 the risk of 58  
 implantation into a foetus was unacceptable. I am glad not to have the  
 problem which 59  
 +++++  
 +++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: intr.  
 +++ Retrieval for this document: 14 units out of 68, = 21%  
 ++ Text units 17-30:  
 demanding; quite a stressful time. Then I thought my relationship with  
 the Pill by that 17  
 stage was that I was really starting to dread it. The changes in my body,  
 it did 18  
 something to me emotionally and a thinking or a feeling process which was  
 horrible. I 19  
 really hated it. It was yukky. One of things with the pill was that you  
 had to take it 20  
 every day and not forget. It wasn't something you could relax about.

(3).txt

page: 2

the pill and my experience was that you fall pregnant. So there was a  
certain amount 22  
of tension naturally. I think there was also the sense of something that  
was 23  
controlling me. It was dictating to me cyclical changes in my body. There  
was a 24  
sense of something being added to my system that wasn't me, that was  
accelerating 25  
or exacerbating things. There was a definite mood change, I could feel it  
when it 26  
started to happen around ovulation there was sense of I suppose you could  
call it 27  
PMT. There was definitely a change. And I really didn't like it at all. I  
hated the fact 28  
that I had to take the Pill, that it had to be in control of me, that I  
had to use 29  
something to control fertility. So I was back on the Pill after M and I  
thought I don't 30

+++++  
+++ Total number of text units retrieved = 31  
+++ Retrievals in 4 out of 5 documents, = 80%.  
+++ The documents with retrievals have a total of 346 text units,  
so text units retrieved in these documents = 9.0%.  
+++ All documents have a total of 427 text units,  
so text units found in these documents = 7.3%.  
+++++

APPENDIX F

Raw data from Q-sort procedure

Sample of raw data sheet for Q-sort procedure.

5

MOST UNLIKE MY EXPERIENCE					NEUTRAL	MOST LIKE MY EXPERIENCE				
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
(2)	(3)	(4)	(4)	(7)	(10)	(7)	(4)	(4)	(3)	(2)
29	27	41	40	30	50	21	36	32	42	43
1	4	24	3	46	37	39	48	14	35	44
	16	45	26	10	38	17	49		12	
	7	18	23	47	25	11	19			
	28			5	34	20	6			
				9	33	13				
				15	31	2				
					8					
					22					

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ AGE 38NUMBER OF CHILDREN 1

METHODS OF BIRTH CONTROL USED (method; years used; outcome):  
 e.g. Pill; 5 years; stopped to have child number 1.

- pill during 20's etc. prior to marriage relationship
- pill 4 years stopped to have child number 1
- condoms currently - erratically

Raw data from Q-sort analysis.

Rankings for each statement for each participant.

Rankings:

-5 (disagree/unlike my experience) to +5 (agree/like my experience)

S	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
1	8 57	45 38 33	26 37 13 23	14 40 48 46	16 32 31 34 11 19 25	50 41 39 29 24 30 15 9 22 18	20 28 49 6 5 17 7	4 1 36 21	10 27 42 3	35 12 2	43 44
2	38 5 31 25 8	36 7 18 19 34	50	13 21 26 2		20 3 17 11 10 14 35 15	1 46 27 40 23 12 47	39 4 16 6 37 49	24 42 43	45 33 29 48 9 41 30	44 28 22 32
3	25 33	45 8 19	48 9 21 50	30 38 24 43 34	22 42 32 37 31 39 26	11 18 5 20 2 6 41	36 23 12 10 35 13 28 14	16 1 15 4	40 47 29 3	27 7 46	49 44 17
4	30 17	46 37 28	38 43 16 14	7 39 35 5	4 21 26 50 9 42 29	34 8 41 13 48 31 15 25 33 18	32 3 1 6 12 22 20	36 11 40 45	19 24 23 10	2 27 47	49 44
5	29 1	27 4 16 7 28	41 24 45 18	40 3 26 23	30 46 10 47 5 9 15	50 37 38 25 34 33 31 8 22	21 39 17 11 20 13 2	36 48 49 19 6	32 14	42 35 12	43 44

S = subjects; numbers in columns represent statements 1-50.

Raw data from Q-sort analysis continued. Rankings for each statement for each participant.

Rankings:

-5 (disagree/unlike my experience) to +5 (agree/like my experience)

S	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
6	26 14	46 31	38 43	19 48 40	7 1	50 8 5 47 22 18 21 33 25 34	6 24 49 30 37 9 23 20 17 3 4	42 27 28 12 11 35	41 13 45 10 15	29 16 36 39	2 44 32
7	41 25 26 30 32	34 29 23 9 11	40 6 49	50 24 35 37	22 19 47 8 15 28	20 18 48 16 1 5 7 43 3 38 45 33 31 14	42 39 2 13 17 21 27 10 4	46 12		44 36	
8		25 37 34	33 41 32 31	50 26 29 49	14 48 38 35 7 47 15	19 5 43 6 10 36 8 1 22 45 27	2 4 13 12 17 28 3	40 42 21 44	11 16 9 46	20 23 24 18	39 30
9	25 38	47 34 37	50 26 7 35	2 33 32 31	23 6 8 42 39 48 5	27 49 1 10 46 4 19 22 14 20	18 15 30 3 28 9 41	36 29 11 45	24 44 16 40	12 17 13	21 43

S = subjects; numbers in columns represent statements 1-50.

Raw data from Q-sort analysis continued. Rankings for each statement for each participant.

Rankings:

-5 (disagree/unlike my experience) to +5 (agree/like my experience)

S	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
10	1 8	7 47 45	31 34 32 19	5 33 25 23	14 24 48 27 17 36 15	37 4 3 10 49 46 22 6 35 16 20 18	29 26 40 30 46 6 39	2 11 21 13	28 41 12 43	9 42 44	38 50
11	21	7 46	14 43 26	47	4 15 29 11 19	1 25 8 31 24 50 5 38 18	45 30 28 41 32 6 2 27 48	3 40 13 49 17 34	20 16 22 35 37 9	42 10 23	36 44 39 12 33
12	45 33 34	47 21 26 43	16 23 48 24	25 32 37	13 20 28 35 18	36 14 5 1 31 6 38 8 4 50	27 46 42 7 40 49 17 3	39 44 11 19	9 10 15 29	30 22 12	2 41
13	43 21	9	8 37 1	24 28	41 29	45 5 33 50 22 15 25 34 14 38 47 31 26 7 49 4	42 10 30 23 18 48 6	16 32 17 46 40	36 19 2 27 39	11 35 20 13 12	44 3

S = subjects; numbers in columns represent statements 1-50.

Raw data from Q-sort analysis continued. Rankings for each statement for each participant.

Rankings:

-5 (disagree/unlike my experience) to +5 (agree/like my experience)

S	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
14	5 1	19 26 32	14 50 4 38	40 31 8 48	16 23 17 24 34 15 7	3 20 42 9 10 12 18 11	21 39 27 49 6 30 35 37	29 13 22 28	25 2 41 36 44	47 46 43	45 33
15	45 7 50	13 34 1	46 47 48 5	4 18 24 11	31 14 26 2	3 32 21 43 25 19 9 20 16	38 35 17 27 6 22 30 37	28 36 41 33 8	10 39 49 42	40 15 23 29	44 12
16	33	25 32 35	50 47 48 34 40	31 6 11 46	24 5 7 17 38 23 39	21 37 36 14 42 16 26 28 22 43	10 9 29 18 30 41 8	13 49 45 15	1 19 20 2	27 12 44	4 3
17	1 31	11 12 47	15 4 44 36	17 42 46	6 21 18 13 7 48 9	40 24 14 33 38 22 5 25 50 26 34	39 3 2 16 10 19 49	29 37 27 20	41 8 30 23	45 43 35	28 32
18	5 38	8 49 25	27 26 39 15	1 50 45 31	17 18 7 16 34 4 21	6 11 32 48 47 20 19 24 40 35	33 37 41 13 23 2 22	9 43 10 3	12 42 36 28	14 44 46	29 30

S = subjects; numbers in columns represent statements 1-50.

Raw data from Q-sort analysis continued. Rankings for each statement for each participant.

Rankings:

-5 (disagree/unlike my experience) to +5 (agree/like my experience)

S	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
19	21 17	37 43 49	25 20 34 26	30 35 32 9	33 24 13 23 27 45 14	41 47 22 28 29 50 38 31 8	44 3 7 1 42 4 11	10 2 6 18	40 16 39 15 5	46 48 36	12 19
20	34 40 32	11 28 21	39 13 47 1	48 29 23 37	2 7 15	24 45 6 49 14 31 33 5 50 25 38 8	43 42 26 41 9 4 36 30	35 18 17 10	16 22 27 12	20 46 44 19	3
21	46 47	24 36 9	31 21 23 16	17 42 50 1	30 19	26 8 5 22 29 34 33 41 32 28 25	20 43 40 49 18 37 11 15	27 10 7 45	14 2 39 12	48 6 35 3 4 44	38 13
22	25 1	43 37 47	20 40 26 18	35 48 2 4	32 45 16 13 19 36 15	38 50 31 34 33 21 17 5 8	49 41 24 11 7 3 42 46	44 14 9 39	10 6 22 30	23 29 12	28 27

S = subjects; numbers in columns represent statements 1-50.

Raw data from Q-sort analysis continued. Rankings for each statement for each participant.

Rankings:  
-5 (disagree/unlike my experience) to +5 (agree/like my experience)

S	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
23	1 15 39	4 40 35	13 46 38 25	14 6 24 30	49 27 31 28 16 50 7	45 8 37 34 47 20 21 26 33 23	5 9 10 44 3 18 22	19 11 12 2	42 48 41 43	29 17	36 32
24	31 33	34 40 47	8 50 21 1	37 32 4 48	5 38 26 46 14 16 6	43 12 35 25 13 11 3	2 20 15 7 22 24 17	49 42 23 18	30 39 36 19	44 45 28	41 29 27 9 10
25	6 15	14 4 13	23 3 16 42	49 46 45 11	7 37 9 40 26 48 10	24 38 1 47 31 33 25 8 34 50	20 5 12 32 21 29 19 41	44 43 22 30	36 28 27	35 39 2	17 18
26	25 31	34 21 8	30 40 37	50 22 49	26 4 29 13 14 24	11 17 42 18 43 44 27 45 5	20 2 9 16 28 6 48 7 33	1 3 41 10	15 35 19 36	47 39 12 23	38 46 32
27	15 4	5 13 1 14 41	7 3 45 47 24	18 2 8 23	46 6 19 9 29 20 34	32 17 10 11 27 33 25 50	43 21 16 49 30 38 37	26 48 12 22	44 36 35	42 28 39	31 40

S = subjects; numbers in columns represent statements 1-50.

Raw data from Q-sort analysis continued. Rankings for each statement for each participant.

Rankings:

-5 (disagree/unlike my experience) to +5 (agree/like my experience)

S	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
28	47 38 31 33	17 16	42 23 37	46 15	6 7 14 27 11	8 25 4 34 50 19 5 10 20 18 28 9	49 1 26 41 13 3	40 39 44 32	12 48 2 29	22 24 30 21	45 36 35 43
29	40 37	47 41 39	33 17 46 18	8 5	7 22 35 26 49 9	32 24 21 34 28 30 38 1 42 29	45 27 44 50 11 36 12 43	4 48 10 16	19 25 20 3	6 31 14 2	13 15 23
30	34 25	33 26 31	24 50 47 37	45 49 43 8	39 40 5 15 13 9	7 11 22 48 14 38 17 21 35	30 6 4 32 46 20 41 3 27	10 28 1 23	18 16 44 42	19 29 36	12 2

S = subjects; numbers in columns represent statements 1-50.

APPENDIX G

Script for focusing procedure

Script for focusing procedure

Take some time to become quiet. Begin by noticing your breath as it moves in and out of your body ..... noticing the rise and fall of your chest as you breath in and out.

Allowing your attention to settle into your body ..... noticing any sensations. There may be sensations of tightness or holding or sensations of warmth and comfort or other sort of sensations. Just noticing whatever it is that is present for you right now.

And if there is something getting in the way of settling into your body right now, just notice how it is you can put that aside for now so that your attention can begin to move into your body ..... noticing any sensations.

And you can notice if there is a particular issue you want to explore right now *(in the procedure used in Stage 3 of the research, participants were first asked to select their own issue to explore and then, in the second focusing process, they were asked to explore their experience of birth control).*

Holding this issue in awareness, also allowing your attention to remain in your body ..... noticing the breath ..... and noticing where in your body there is a response to this issue. Attending to the experience of this issue in your body. Noticing where it is you sense it and noticing the sensations in that part of your body. Allowing your attention to be with this experience of sensing the issue in the body.

You can also notice the feeling sense around the sensations, the felt sense of this issue. Allowing your attention to stay with this body sense without thinking or analysing or trying to understand the issue in any of the usual ways. All you have to do is attend to the felt sense in the body ..... just noticing.

And you can notice how it is possible for something to arise from the felt sense of its accord ..... it may be an image ..... perhaps a word or a phrase ..... a memory ..... or something else that just comes into awareness of its own accord. All you need do is continue attending to the felt sense ..... just noticing ..... until there is a shift in the felt sense..... And you may want to draw or write when this is appropriate for you.

Adapted from Gendlin (1978).